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CATHERINE SIDNEY

CATHERINE SIDNEY

BY

FRANCIS DEMING HOYT

Humility, that low, sweet root
From which all heavenly virtues shoot

The Loves of the Angels

This is that precious pearl, which is hidden from many

The Imitation

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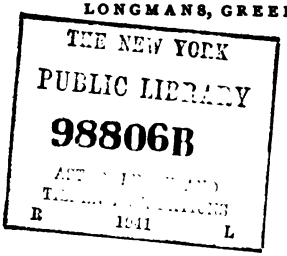

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CATHERINE SIDNEY

CATHERINE SIDNEY

I

An Unexpected Visitor

CHORUS

Tranquidello, tranquidello,
Tranquidello, dello, dello;
He who loves the Old Mill
Is a hearty, gay fellow.

"WELL sung, fellows, well sung! Fill up your glasses and let us drink once more to the Old Mill. Charley, you're a perfect Campanini; your vocal accomplishments would have won fame for you on the operatic stage."

"Fred, I always knew you were an unconscionable flatterer. Your lips must often have kissed the Blarney stone, even before you learned the slang of college days. Really, my boy, if the song pleases you, I suspect its melodious effects, in the rendering, as well as the hearing, are not a little enhanced by your excellent wine. It must have come

straight from the Falernian Hills. What do you think, Billy?"

"That the song is seraphic; that the wine surpasses the nectar of the gods. By the bye, Fred, do you remember that famous serenade we gave during our Soph. year, when we struck the wrong house, and were interrupted in the midst of our enthusiastic rendering of a favorite song by the appearance of a night-cap at an upper window, and a gruff voice shouting to us that if we didn't quit our d—— howling and get out of the yard as quickly as our feet could carry us, the dog would show us the way?"

The loud laugh which greeted this reminiscence of one of the early escapades of their college life had not yet fully ceased, when a tap at the window caused the merry company to start suddenly and glance in the direction from which the sound came.

"The old man is after us again," said Will Davidge.

"Well, I'll be hanged if he finds us as ready to move on this time," said Charley Spencer.

"I suppose it's a 'cop,' who wonders what all the fun's about, and feels it his duty

to investigate," remarked Fred. Another hearty laugh followed this suggestion, and the possibility of a nocturnal visit from one of the guardians of the peace furnished a little piquant excitement to the convivial gathering. Another tap, somewhat louder than the first, brought Fred to his feet and led him to the front window.

As he raised the shade suddenly and looked out, he exclaimed, "Great Caesar's ghost!"

A young woman, lightly clad and covered with snow, stood in the area, and as the shade was raised, looked appealingly towards the window, and in an evidently excited manner said something which could not be understood by those inside.

It was a bitterly cold and stormy night in January. Fred Drayton had invited a few of his old college chums, then living in New York, to a symposium, as they called it, at his father's house on Madison Avenue, to celebrate in a fitting manner his twenty-fifth birthday. After a late and somewhat prolonged dinner, the young gentlemen had adjourned to the smoking-room in the basement, where, over their wine and cigars, they

sang the old college songs, told stories, and made merry till well after midnight.

It was about one o'clock, and the parting song of "Auld Lang Syne" had already been suggested, when the knock at the window came to interrupt the festivities.

As soon as Fred had recovered from his first surprise, he hastened to the hall, and opening the front basement door, invited the young woman to enter. As she crossed the threshold and gazed about her for a moment, with a startled look upon her face, Fred was conscious that he stood in the presence of a lady, as well as a handsome woman.

"I am looking, sir," she said, "for Dr. Eaton's house. The night is so dark and stormy that I was unable to read the numbers over the doors. I know that he lives in this block, and seeing a light at the basement window, I took the liberty of knocking, to inquire."

"Why, yes, madam," replied Fred, "Dr. Eaton lives very near. I will show you the way to his house."

"Thank you, sir," she replied; "that will not be necessary. If you will kindly tell me

how many doors away it is, I am sure I shall have no trouble in finding my way."

"Let me see," said Fred, looking straight into her big brown eyes, completely bewildered by the extraordinary situation in which he found himself. "Dr. Eaton lives — one — two — three; no, really, madam, I hardly think it would be safe for me to give you such a confused direction. I am sure the only satis — safe — I mean the only proper way, will be for me to show you to Dr. Eaton's door. If you will be good enough to wait one moment, I will get my coat and hat."

Rushing to the upper hall, he donned a weather coat and cap, seized an umbrella, and hurried back to the basement door. As he passed the smoking-room, he thrust his head in and said excitedly: "Excuse me, boys; it's an emergency call."

Dr. Eaton's house was just six doors from the Drayton's, and Fred, it must be confessed, knew it as well as he knew the number of his father's house. But as he raised the umbrella over the head of his unknown companion, he wished it were at least six blocks away. He said something about the

severity of the storm, to which she assented in monosyllables, and his next remark was: "Here we are, at Dr. Eaton's house."

Thanking him with a dignified bow, she hastened up the steps and rang the outer bell. Fred followed and, apologizing as he did so, pointed out to her the speaking tube through which she must communicate her wishes when the call was answered. Presently a voice was heard through the tube: "Well, who is it?" Turning away politely, as if indifferent to the reply, Fred caught the words, "Miss Catherine Sidney; my father is very ill." Then after some questions and answers, through the tube, which he did not understand, he heard her say in grateful tones "Oh, thank you, doctor, thank you! Please hurry."

And turning she ran down the steps as quickly as she had mounted them. Fred was at her side in a moment, and holding the umbrella over her head — although it was of little use, because of the wind and drifting snow — said to her in the most respectful and kindly tone of voice: "My dear madam, I cannot consent to your going home alone this dreadful night. I am sure you will

pardon me if I insist upon seeing you to your door."

"You are very kind, sir," she replied; "but it is only a few steps, and really I am not afraid."

He persisted, however, and as she made no further objection, they continued on together, she walking so rapidly that it was with some difficulty that he kept up with her, for the snow was deep, and as they had turned easterly, into one of the cross streets, they were going against the wind. At Lexington Avenue she turned north, and a few yards further on stopped in front of a little brick house which showed no evidence of life within, except a dim light in one of the upper windows.

"This is where we live," she said. "Thank you very much, sir, for your great kindness. Good-night." And she flew so quickly up the steps that before he realized it she was at the door, fumbling with the lock.

"Good-night," he called out. "I sincerely hope, madam, that the illness which sent you out to-night may not prove as serious as you have feared." She hesitated a moment, turned her face upwards, and as the shawl

which had covered her head fell back upon her shoulders, exclaimed: "God's will be done!" As she disappeared through the open door, Fred thought — perhaps it was only a hope — that she turned and looked at him.

II

An Unwelcome Intruder

THE door closed and he was left standing alone in the pitiless storm of the night. Closing the umbrella and turning up the collar of his coat, he started towards Madison Avenue, walking slowly with bended head, revolving in his mind the events of the evening. The merry laughter of his college friends seemed to resound in his ears; then the chorus of voices singing "Tranquidello, tranquidello"; the sudden tap at the window, which had startled them all in the midst of their revelries. He stood again, in spirit, at the open basement door and gazed upon the sweet, anxious face of the young woman who had confronted him there; he recalled the quiet, dignified reserve with which she sought to dissuade him from accompanying her to the doctor's, or to her own house. And then, again and again, he kept repeating

to himself her last words, "God's will be done."

As he approached Fourth Avenue, going west, thus wrapt in thought, he failed to notice, on the opposite side of the street, the figure of a man, who slunk into the area of one of the houses on the avenue as Fred was crossing it. The latter had proceeded but a short distance on the next block, when he suddenly realized that some one was approaching him from behind. Without stopping he turned his head slightly to see who it was. As he did so he felt a stinging blow on the back of his head. It was the last thing of which he was conscious that night.

III

A Friend Indeed

DR. EATON had lost no time in making himself ready for a sick call after hearing Catherine Sidney's voice through the tube. He felt that the case must be a critical one that had taken a young lady out into the storm at such an hour.

Prepared for such emergencies, for they were not infrequent in his practice, he moved expeditiously, and within fifteen minutes after he had been aroused from his sleep, he was in the street, bag in hand, battling with the elements.

"Whew!" he exclaimed, as he turned the corner and caught the full force of the easterly blast in his face, "what a night!" As soon as the blinding cloud of snow had passed sufficiently to permit him to see a few yards ahead, he descried the figure of a man bending over something black on the sidewalk,

and in another moment he saw that the black object lying in the snow was the form of another man.

Thinking that some one had been overcome with cold and had fallen in the snow, he quickened his pace. At the same moment the man who stood bending over the prostrate form turned, and seeing some one approaching, took to his heels, running towards Lexington Avenue. The doctor, realizing at once that it was a case of foul play, started in pursuit. When the highwayman reached Third Avenue he turned south, and the doctor, who was several yards behind, fearing that the rascal would escape, called out as loudly as he could, "Stop, thief!"

The cry had the desired effect, for as he turned the corner he saw that the fleeing man had been intercepted by a policeman, who was struggling with him. The doctor immediately took a hand in the scuffle, with the result that the wrists of the ruffian were quickly encircled with steel bracelets by the officer.

Assuring the latter that he would present himself at the police station as promptly as his professional duties would permit, the doc-

tor hurried back to the spot where he had first seen the man just arrested. There in the snow lay the unconscious form of the highwayman's victim.

Bending over him the doctor examined his heart and found that he was still living. Then he tried to raise him to a sitting position. As he did so the head was thrown back, the cap fell off, and Dr. Eaton was startled by seeing the face of his intimate personal friend and neighbor, Fred Drayton.

The doctor was an athlete, and it did not take him long to lift the prostrate form of his friend in his arms and start towards Madison Avenue. The condition of the streets and the velocity of the wind made his progress difficult, and when he reached the Drayton mansion, the delay which he experienced before anyone responded to the bell seemed to him interminable.

At length the butler appeared at the door in dishabille, and with an alarmed expression on his face. Fred was taken to his own room, the family were summoned, and each one, filled with alarm and anxiety, sought to do something for the relief of the patient. Dr. Eaton, painfully conscious of Catherine's

appeal to him to hurry, made the quickest possible disposition of the case thrust so unexpectedly upon him, and after giving minute directions as to the treatment to be observed, hastened away to the bedside of Catherine Sidney's father.

IV

The Draytons

THE Draytons were an old New England family, who had resided for many years in New York, where Mr. Drayton had acquired a comfortable fortune in the shipping business. While attending closely to his office duties, he had always been a good deal of a student, cultivating the best in literature and art and science, and frequenting the society of those of similar tastes, rather than that of the gay and fashionable world. His strict ideas of justice and right led him at times to be somewhat exacting with his subordinates and with those in whom he had reposed a trust; but with it all he possessed a kindly, considerate nature, and his charities were distributed with a generous hand. He was fond of music and indulged that taste freely at the opera and the concert hall.

Mrs. Drayton was one of those rare women whose virtues distinguish them equally in their domestic and social life. Devoted to her husband and children, her first care was to make their home always attractive and to educate her children in all that makes for the best and highest in life. In the world of society her affability and sincerity, as well as a certain unassumed dignity, made her always a welcome guest. Her weakness — if so it need be called — was a punctilious observance of the dictates of fashion, even when the fickle dame was unreasonably exacting. As her daughter's ideas in this respect were less rigid, and Agnes found the demands of polite society not only irksome, but at times inconsistent with her athletic ambition and the enjoyment of her alfresco sports, Mrs. Drayton frequently found it necessary to insist upon this young lady's giving more serious attention to outward forms and appearance.

At the time of which we are speaking there were three children living. The eldest, Fred, had graduated at Yale at the age of twenty-one, and after two years of close study of the law, had been admitted to the

Bar of New York. While he was never considered a bookworm or plodder, he had stood well in his class, was thoroughly liked by his associates, and was respected as a gentleman. During his college days, as well as since, he had been a careful student of history, and his tastes led him rather to the reading of the best works of literature and biography than to amusing himself with the popular fiction of the day.

His sister, Agnes, was the personification of irrepressible mirth and fun. Since her début two years ago, she had seen a good deal of social life, went frequently to the theatre and opera, and generally accompanied her mother when she went out.

But her supreme enjoyment was the freedom which she found in her country life at their Westchester home during the summer months, when she could wander about "the farm" dressed as she pleased, generally with a very unconventional hat on the back of her head, or no hat at all; sometimes mounted, with her younger brother, on a load of hay; sometimes riding up and down the country roads and fields upon one of her pet horses; always laughing, always ready

for some dare-devil adventure. The family servants worshipped her, thought that anything Miss Agnes did was entirely correct, and found their greatest pleasure in waiting upon her.

She was devoted to her brothers, whom she thought a little better than any other young men she had met in life, and they were both very fond of their sister. But she would tease, and sometimes she made such fun of Fred that in his exasperation he would turn upon her and say, "Agnes, you're a perfect tom-boy. Why don't you join a circus and ride the mule?" Which would draw forth such peals of laughter from her that everybody, including Fred would be seized with the contagion and laugh with her.

Louis, the younger brother, was seventeen, a precocious age, at which young people generally know enough and are smart enough to have lost the charm of simplicity, but are too immature to realize their own limitations. He was inclined at times to be bumptious, but he had such a wholesome fear of Agnes' raillery that one look from her, or a giggle, was sufficient to make him think seriously before speaking further.

Nevertheless they were great cronies. Louis would stand on his head if Agnes asked him to do so, and she generally insisted that his whims were entirely reasonable and must be gratified.

The Draytons were devout Episcopalians.

V

The Eatons

DR. EATON, a New York physician, having an excellent clientele and enjoying a comfortable income, was a man of liberal education in the best sense of the term. His extensive reading during the last years of his college life, and the years immediately subsequent, had led him into a general study of religious questions, and at one time he had seriously contemplated entering the ministry of the Episcopal Church, of which his ancestors had been devout members.

After a good deal of hesitation, however — due largely to the doubts and uncertainties which had resulted from his reading of history and his confused study of theological questions — he had decided to adopt the medical profession, and had, at the time of which we are speaking, been a practising physician for about ten years. In his early

professional life he had married a Miss Bailey, the daughter of an Anglican clergyman of western New York.

In their intellectual and literary tastes they were congenial, generally reading the same books and periodicals, and discussing together the questions suggested by their reading.

They were not long in discovering that they were both unsettled in their religious convictions, and that the more they investigated, the greater became their perplexities, and the less satisfied they were with the teachings of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Together they studied carefully the history of the sixteenth century and the lives of the great "reformers" — Martin Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Zwinglius, Bucer, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and others. They spent many hours over Merle d'Aubigné and Ranke. Finally it occurred to them that it might be well to investigate the claims and arguments of "the other side." They read Döllinger's Church History, and then Alzog's—which had just been translated into English — then, successively, "Letters to a

Prebendary," "The Life of Father Faber," Newman's "Apologia," Milner's "End of Controversy," and finally "The Faith of Our Fathers," by Cardinal Gibbons, which had recently been published.

At the conclusion of the last they felt that they could no longer consistently or conscientiously call themselves Protestants. They made the acquaintance of a good Paulist Father on Fifty-ninth Street, and a few months later were received into the Catholic Church.

VI

A Shock

WHEN Fred Drayton left his young companions in the smoking-room on Madison Avenue, they anticipated his return within a few minutes; but when a quarter of an hour passed and he did not make his appearance, they said "good-night" to each other and started home. The butler had turned out the lights and gone to his room for the night, when the doctor's repeated and prolonged ring brought him down in a hurry to the front door.

Fred's condition was not as serious as at first had been feared. His assailant's blow with a sand bag had produced concussion of the brain, but no fracture, and within half an hour after the doctor left he had regained consciousness.

The first words he uttered, even before opening his eyes, were, "God's will be done." As none of the family had ever heard him

make use of any such language, they were somewhat startled; but the voice was welcome. And in a few days he was up and about as usual.

The culprit who had attacked him as he was returning home was brought up the following morning in the Police Court, and after a preliminary examination, held for trial in General Sessions.

When the case came up there, about a fortnight later, there was practically no defence. He gave his name as Joe Gannon. Dr. Eaton testified as to his coming upon the defendant bending over the prostrate form of a man on the sidewalk; of his running away upon the doctor's approach; of the arrest of the prisoner on Third Avenue, etc. The policeman who made the arrest corroborated the doctor's story, and Fred related the facts as described in a previous chapter and identified as his the watch shown him and declared by the policeman to have been taken from the prisoner after his arrest. The culprit was sentenced to three years in state's prison.

Fred, accompanied by Agnes and his friend Charley Spencer, had occupied a seat

in the rear of the court room during the trial, and remained there for some minutes after the conclusion of the case in which they were interested.

As they were leaving the building they met a number of prisoners, escorted by officers, who had been sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. Several of them were taking leave of their friends — generally women — who gave vent to their emotion by tears and affectionate embraces. The attention of Fred and his companions was naturally riveted upon this painful scene, and they unconsciously halted to gaze at the strange characters whom they saw.

Presently Agnes, who was quick to see and take in everything, nudged Fred and said: 'Do you see your friend Gannon over there in the corner? He looks as meek as Moses. But who is that lovely girl talking so earnestly with her hand on his shoulder?"

Fred looked in the direction that Agnes had indicated, saw his assailant, and a young woman standing by him, looking up into his face and talking anxiously. Presently he saw her hand the convict a little book, and as he took it from her, he noticed that

hanging from it was what appeared to be a rosary. The man accepted the offering with a pleased manner, and as he was placing it in his pocket, the woman turned around so as to face the visitors directly. As she did so Fred recognized CATHERINE SIDNEY!

VII

A Mystery

A FEW evenings after the events recorded in the last chapter, Fred called at Dr. Eaton's and found him alone, in the library. The doctor received him cordially and invited him to take a glass of wine and light a cigar.

After a little general conversation, Fred turned suddenly to his friend and said: "Doctor, who *are* the Sidneys?" He spoke deliberately, and with such an air of ill-concealed interest, that the doctor turned upon him an inquisitive look and hesitated a moment before making any reply.

"You know," continued Fred, without seeming to notice the doctor's puzzled look, "it was on my return from Lexington Avenue, where I had left Miss Sidney, after conducting her to your door and then escorting her home, that terribly stormy night, that I was attacked and rendered senseless by that ruffian

Gannon. She seemed a perfect lady, and I confess I felt somewhat interested, not only because of her beauty and dignity of manner, but likewise because of the heroic spirit which led her to undertake such a difficult and dangerous errand for the sake of an invalid father."

He paused again, as if uncertain whether to proceed. The doctor, who had eyed him closely as he spoke, was convinced that his young friend had something more to say upon the subject, and therefore remained silent.

After two or three puffs from his cigar, he continued in a somewhat strained and halting manner: "Last Wednesday morning, as Agnes, Charley Spencer, and I were leaving the court house, after the trial of that vile wretch — he was convicted, you know, and sentenced to three years in state's prison — our attention was attracted by a group of prisoners at one end of the corridor, who were apparently taking leave of their relatives and friends. They were a motley, forbidding assemblage, I assure you, and we should have passed on, after a momentary glance at them, had not Agnes nudged me,

and pointing to one of the farther corners said: 'There's your friend Gannon'; adding, as I craned my neck to take a last look at the scoundrel: 'Who's the young lady that appears to be so much interested in him?' As my eye caught sight of the wretched thief, at the extreme end of the company, I saw a young woman looking up into his face and talking earnestly. Presently she put into his hand a small package, which he accepted with a smile and slid into his pocket, glancing around at the same time with a furtive sort of a look. Just then she turned her face in our direction and I — beheld — Catherine — Sidney.

"Doctor, I won't just say that I was surprised; I was so shocked, so completely dumbfounded, that I nearly collapsed, as I did that night, when Gannon applied his sand bag to the back of my head. I stood for a moment transfixed; it seemed as though my blood turned cold, and I am sure my face was pallid.

"In a moment I turned to Agnes and said: 'Come, come, let's get out of this horrible place.' I thought we would never get to the street and breathe the fresh air again,

and I'm afraid Charley Spencer thought me very rude, as I left him with a hurried, unceremonious 'good-by' at the carriage door. He said he was obliged to go down town, and we were anxious to get home as soon as possible.

"As we drove off Agnes exasperated me with one of her inquisitive looks, and I felt like boxing her ears when, after eyeing me closely for a few moments, she said, in a most aggravating tone: 'What on earth is the matter with you, Fred? Were you jealous of Joe Gannon?'

"Perhaps it was merely a case of another idol broken. But somehow I had pictured that beautiful young woman as an angelic creature, graced with all the virtues. I could conceive nothing but good, perfect, of her. Imagine my astonishment, my utter dismay, when I beheld her in that strange place — the ante-chamber of the criminal court — consorting with thieves and murderers. Can you unravel the mystery?"

Fred's manner had become more and more animated as he went on, and when he concluded, his face was flushed.

Dr. Eaton, who possessed a most sympa-

thetic nature, had listened with interest to his young friend's story, and especially to the latter part of his remarks. He loved Fred, and just then he felt like telling him so. But instead, he sat back in his chair and gazed at the ceiling, as though absorbed in his thoughts, and puffed away vigorously at his cigar.

Presently Fred, who had risen from his chair and was pacing up and down the room somewhat excitedly, noticed a smile on the doctor's face. Stopping abruptly, he looked straight at him for a moment, and said in a tone of evident annoyance: "So you think I'm a d—— fool, do you? I'm inclined to think so myself."

"I don't think anything of the sort," quietly remarked the doctor. "You've gone very wide of the mark this time, my boy. I have had many thoughts running through my mind while you were speaking — none of them, I assure you, uncomplimentary to you."

VIII

The Sidneys

HE remained silent a few moments, and his young friend resumed his seat. Then, studying his cigar attentively as he knocked the ashes from it, he spoke deliberately, as though anxious to weigh his words.

"Fred, you have spoken frankly to me of your thoughts and feelings in this matter, and I am going to tell you something, or rather some things, which I am sure will interest you. Let me say, to begin with, that the Sidneys are one of the most charming families I have ever met in my life. They are people of education and refinement, and command the respect of those who know them.

"They are an English family and have lived in this country only about two years. Mr. Sidney was a professor of classics for several years in some collegiate institution

on the other side, but had to resign his position because of a long siege of illness which nearly cost him his life. Upon his recovery they were persuaded to come to New York, by some kind friends living here, with the hope that their financial affairs, which were a good deal strained, would be improved in this city.

"Soon after their arrival Mr. Sidney obtained a position in the counting-room of an English importing house, but at so small a salary that it became necessary for the family — Mr. Sidney, wife, and daughter — to adopt a rigid economy. Miss Catherine, who is a woman of superior mind as well as a lovely character, took it into her head that she must make herself useful and help to support the family. It did not take long to secure what she wanted; she is visiting governess in the family of Mr. Alfred Ewing, on Fifth Avenue. You know the Ewings?"

Fred nodded his head and tried to look quite unconcerned; but there was an unmistakable expression of satisfaction in his face.

"Some months ago Mrs. Eaton and I met the Sidneys one evening at the house of

a mutual friend, and were captivated by them. My wife had called upon them about a week before the date of your early morning adventure, and when Mr. Sidney was suddenly taken ill that night, having no one they could call — they have but one servant, who comes in by the day — Miss Catherine started out alone to find me. She knew the block in which I lived, but was so blinded by the storm that she was unable to make out the numbers on the houses, or the plate on my office door, and seeing a light in the basement of your house, the only evidence of life anywhere about, in her extreme anxiety she tapped at the window, to obtain the information she wanted. She was terribly mortified, as she afterwards confessed to me, that she should have been the cause of your coming out that awful night."

Here Fred, who had been twisting about in his chair, brought his foot down, from his knee, with a thud to the floor. It was evident that he was not altogether in sympathy with the suggestion conveyed by this last remark — it might be that he was a little piqued by it.

"And let me add," continued the doctor,

"to this day she knows nothing whatever of the accident which befell you on your way home that night."

Fred started. Leaning forward in his chair, he turned upon his friend a look of astonishment which half implied doubt. The latter, without changing his position, raised his eyes and met Fred's stare with an expression that plainly said, "Do you doubt it?"

There was a momentary pause in the conversation. Presently settling back in his chair and thrusting one hand into his pocket, young Drayton knitted his brows and hesitated a moment, as if uncertain just how to begin.

"Doctor, what you have told me is very interesting, very gratifying certainly, and I thank you sincerely." Here he hesitated again. "But, in view of all you have said of these excellent people, I don't quite understand how it is possible for Miss Catherine Sidney to be on such intimate terms with the dregs of creation, the convicts of a criminal court."

The doctor smiled — the same smile which a few moments before had exasperated his friend.

"That, my dear boy — although it appears so strange to you — can be easily explained. When visiting Bellevue Hospital, I have several times seen Miss Sidney going about in the wards, and the look of pleasure that lit up the faces of the poor sufferers, as she approached their beds, told me plainly that she was a welcome visitor there. When I spoke to the superintendent about her one day, he told me that she came almost daily to the hospital, generally bringing with her some little dainties or delicacies in the way of food, which the physicians allowed her to give the sick; that she frequently spends considerable time sitting at the bedside of the most unfortunate cases, and that the patients whom she thus favors are always better, brighter, more contented after her visits. He told me, moreover, that he had learned from the police that this same young lady is in the habit of visiting frequently the criminal courts and prisons, striving to aid and comfort those who have strayed from the path of virtue and are suffering the consequences of their crimes."

Fred had for some moments experienced an uncomfortable sensation in his throat,

and had apparently been trying to swallow something which stuck there. He coughed, too, and used his handkerchief rather vigorously. As the doctor finished the last sentence, the whole truth of the situation, which had seemed so incomprehensible, dawned upon him. He sprang from his chair, exclaiming, "What a brute I am!" and began pacing up and down the room with his hands in his pockets. The doctor watched him affectionately for a little while and resumed.

"I haven't told you all, nor can I begin to do so now. But in justice I think I ought to mention one little circumstance, which I fear may not please you. The Sidneys are Catholics."

If he had run plump into a stone wall, Fred could not have been more suddenly or completely arrested in his progress than he was by this statement. "What!" he exclaimed, "you don't mean to tell me that these people are Romanists?"

"Yes, Romanists; dyed in the wool; Papists some of your friends would call them. To me they are devout, loyal children of Mother Church."

"Well, you astonish me."

There was silence again for several moments as Fred resumed his promenade, with eyes cast down immediately in front of him. Stopping again suddenly in front of the doctor, he said in a rather cynical tone of voice: "Then I suppose Miss Sidney goes to Mass every morning before breakfast, crosses herself with holy water as she goes in and out of church, confesses her sins to a priest, and counts her beads like any old woman."

"A very correct picture, my dear boy; at least as far as your description goes. If you had added something more, about her not eating meat on Friday, fasting frequently, going to church always, rain or shine, on Sunday, kneeling at the altar rail amongst the poor and ignorant and lowly, instructing dirty little brats at Sunday school, kneeling morning and evening to say her prayers, and so forth, your picture would have been somewhat more complete. Do these things offend your æsthetic taste, Fred?"

"Well, really, doctor, it doesn't seem to me that this is a question of taste, but rather a matter to be judged by the canons of common sense. I don't see the sense of all these

things. And unless you know it, I should be slow to believe that Miss Sidney makes them a part of her religion. Why should she?"

"Well, Fred, I'll tell you. Of course I am not familiar with Miss Sidney's rule of life. But as a practical Catholic I am sure she makes these things an important part of her religion. She clings to the Faith of her Fathers, and that Faith inculcates the virtues of which, it seems to me, you speak slightingly: humility, self-abnegation, christian charity, and many more of the same character. Why, you ask, should she do these things? Because she loves her God. You yourself have learned from her lips that her most earnest prayer — which I believe you would fain make your own — is, 'God's will be done.'"

As is frequently the case with thoughtful men who are engaged in serious conversation, each revolving in his own mind the remarks of the other, there was now a few moments of silence. Presently Fred turned quietly to his elder friend, and in a somewhat subdued tone of voice said: "Doctor, what *is* it that makes you Catholics cling so tenaciously to your Faith? Why do you attach

so much importance to religious notions and practices which the rest of the world consider obsolete and superfluous?"

"Answering your question in the briefest possible way, Fred, I should say: The Grace of God, seconded on our part by humility of spirit and implicit faith in the infallible Author of our being. But, my dear fellow, your inquiry opens up an immense field — too many subjects for us to take up to-night. I have a call yet to make before going to bed. Come around some evening next week and dine with us. If you will let me know when you are coming, I will make no engagements, but keep the docket clear for our post-prandial debate. We shall have plenty of time then to discuss these questions *seriatim* and *ad libitum*."

He filled Fred's wine glass and offered him another cigar, which, however, the latter declined. After a little further general conversation he bade his friend "good-night" and started home.

The Draytons lived only a few doors south of Dr. Eaton's, but it was half an hour later when Fred inserted his latch-key into the lock of the front door. On reaching the

sidewalk, after parting with the doctor, he hesitated a moment and then turned north. At the first corner his steps led him in an easterly direction. Reaching Lexington Avenue he turned south, proceeding very deliberately. He had been walking with bowed head, absorbed in his thoughts, taking no note of anything about him. But now he raised his head and studied the buildings on the opposite side of the street. Presently he noticed a dim light in one of the upper windows of a little brick house a few doors from the corner. He stood still and fixed his eyes on the window. It seemed to him that the light grew brighter as he gazed at it, and a moment later the shadow of a woman, moving slowly, with bended head, was thrown upon the window shade. Fred stood as though riveted to the earth. He was mortified at the thought of his being observed there, staring at the windows opposite; but his conscience assured him that his motives were upright, and somehow his heart prompted him to linger. The figure passed at intervals, two or three times, with the same posture; and finally as she moved by the window, the watcher from the street

noticed that she pressed something to her lips, which she held in her hand. Five minutes later the light disappeared, and Fred started suddenly and moved off with rapid step, a little ashamed of himself and fearing perhaps that he might be discovered.

Before retiring that night he knelt by the side of his bed, and with an earnestness and fervor which he had never before known, he said aloud: "God's will be done." He soon fell asleep and dreamt that he was walking along the road through a beautiful country, with the same college chums that had joined with him in celebrating his birthday, on that memorable evening. They were laughing merrily and singing the old song, "Tranquidello, tranquidello," as they sauntered along. Turning a bend in a lonely part of the road, they suddenly came upon a poor man lying by the wayside, stripped of his garments and bleeding profusely. A figure knelt by his side, and bending compassionately over him, was wiping the blood from his face and binding up his wounds. As Fred approached, the suffering man turned his face towards him; it was Joe Gannon. The good Samaritan that knelt over him was Catherine Sidney.

IX

Several Hearty Laughs

FRED was at the breakfast table promptly at eight o'clock the next morning. Promptness was one of the cardinal virtues with Mr. Drayton, and his wife and son had always endeavored to conform themselves to his wishes in this respect. Agnes, who loved her father devotedly and was constantly on the lookout to gratify his every wish, had evidently inherited — from some distant ancestor — an unfortunate weakness for procrastinating and being just a little late on occasions. She knew it, scolded herself severely, and made frequent resolutions to mend her dilatory ways. Now and then, with a strenuous effort, she managed to arrive on time, and then she always laughed, as though it were the funniest thing in the world. She used to say, when it happened, that she felt like shaking hands with herself.

The breakfast had proceeded quietly this morning for ten or fifteen minutes, and the conversation had lagged in a desultory way, when Agnes was heard coming downstairs, two steps at a bound, and singing as merrily as a skylark in June. She rushed into the dining-room with her face wreathed in smiles; kissed her mother, and then her father, "good morning"; and as she passed Fred, who was looking very serious, pinched his arm. He turned with a scowl on his face; but the frown disappeared quickly when she threw her arm around his neck, laughed in his face, and kissed him. She bounced into her chair somewhat unceremoniously, and then looked around the table with a little feeling of uneasiness, anticipating a reminder that the breakfast hour was eight o'clock.

Her father helped her to a chop, and as he passed the plate said to her: "Agnes, my dear, why are you so late again this morning?"

"Why, father, you know I was out late last night; and really I was so dead tired when I woke this morning that I found it almost impossible to rub the sleep out of my eyes."

Fred, who was always anxious to protect his sister and save her from any embarrass-

ment, looked up and promptly inquired where she had been the previous evening.

"Freddie, my boy," she replied, "you missed the opportunity of your life in not being with us last night. We went to see Owens in 'Solon Shingle' at the Broadway. Why, Fred, it was the funniest thing I ever saw in my life. I nearly split my sides laughing, and the whole house was in a constant roar all the evening." And she laughed so heartily over the recollection of what she had seen that the others caught the contagion and were quite chatty during the rest of the meal.

"Really, Agnes, if the visible effects of Mr. Owens' performance were likely to prove so fatal, I am glad I was not one of your party. I am not ready to shake off this mortal coil, even with an explosion of laughter. And as to missing the opportunity of my life last evening, I hope — that is to say, I mean, I am not so sure that you are altogether right."

"Ah!" exclaimed Agnes, casting a sly glance at Fred over her cup of coffee. She knew that he had spent the evening at Dr. Eaton's. "Anything new about Joe Gannon's friend, the *casta diva* of your mid-winter's night adventure?"

Fred blushed as he knitted his brow, but made no reply, and Agnes looked serious for a moment, for she saw her remark had annoyed her brother.

"Did you see anything of our friends at the theatre?" inquired Mr. Drayton.

"Oh yes, quite a number. Mrs. Barclay and George sat in the box adjoining ours."

"What did she wear?" interjected Mrs. Drayton.

"Well really, mamma, I was so completely absorbed in Solon Shingle and his 'bar'l of apple sass' that I took no notice of what she wore."

"But, my dear, Mrs. Barclay is one of the best gowned women in New York. The last time I saw her — at Mrs. Paulding's reception — she wore one of the most exquisite dresses that I ever saw in my life. Everybody raved over it. Indeed anyone who has the slightest ambition to be *distingué* in the matter of dress cannot do better than study Mrs. Barclay, whether in the drawing-room or the theatre."

"Yes, mamma dear, I know I ought to have been more observing. But positively my eyes were filled with tears from laughing,

and I was so red in the face that I didn't dare to speak or look at anyone during the play."

"But as you left the house, couldn't you take a glance at the costumes near you?"

"Well, mamma, I'll tell you how it was. As we started to go out, we met Mrs. Trumbull and Mary. They were accompanied by Mrs. Trumbull's nephew, Lieutenant Hazleton, a young artillery officer who has recently been assigned to the army post at Governor's Island. Mary introduced her cousin to me, and as he very politely escorted me to our carriage, I could not — that is, I don't think I did — turn to see anybody else."

Fred glanced out of the corner of his eyes at Agnes, as she hesitated in this last remark. She was apparently quite intent upon cutting a piece of meat just at that moment, but she felt that Fred was looking at her, and just the slightest bit of color mantled her cheeks. He was quick to notice it, and taking advantage of the situation, exclaimed: "Ah! The old poets tell us that cruel Mars once won the love of tender Venus; and I've always noticed that in our day brass buttons have an irresistible charm for the gentler sex."

Agnes looked daggers at him for about

three seconds and then sputtered: "Fred, you talk like a goose." Then she laughed again in her own natural way and said: "Well, we had a real good time; but I'm afraid Lieutenant Hazelton was provoked and disgusted with me. As we started to cross the sidewalk, to reach our carriage, the lieutenant kindly offered to assist me — which kind offer, Freddie dear (turning a complaisant look on her brother), I accepted. There was a light covering of snow on the pavement, and as he reached out his arm to help me, he slipped and sat — straight — down — in the snow. I couldn't help it; I was sorry for him; but Solon Shingle had started my risibles, and I just stood there and laughed as though there was nothing else in the world to do.

"Uncle Will sprang forward and helped him to his feet, and Margaret, who was laughing almost as badly as I was, nudged me and said: 'Agnes, I think you are horrid!' And I think I was. But what could I do?"

After a moment she added: "Anyhow, if the lieutenant was annoyed, I think he forgave me; for after handing me into the carriage, he raised his hat and pressed my hand,

just enough to say, 'I don't care if I did fall; it's all right.' And I think I made him understand that it *was* all right."

Fred had been listening, with an interested and amused expression, to Agnes' description of her exit from the theatre; but when she naïvely told of how the young officer had bidden her "good-night," a quizzical look came over his face and he began picking crumbs from the tablecloth as though he needed something to do.

"Wasn't Trumbull there with his wife and daughter?" asked Mr. Drayton.

"No, papa, he was not. Mary said that her father had been obliged to attend the annual dinner of some society of which he is president."

"Poor fellow; it must have been a trial to him," said Mr. Drayton. "He's daft on the theatre, has a box at the opera, and would rather see a good play than eat. I knew of his running away once from an opportunity to make a clean thousand dollars, just to keep an engagement with his wife and Mary to go to a matinée at Daly's. What do you think of that? He just cleared out like a boy running away from school."

"But papa," objected Agnes, "don't you think a gentleman should keep his engagements? Even with his wife and daughter?"

This was what might be called a home thrust. Agnes did not intend any disrespect or want of consideration for her father's pronounced views. But he had so often expressed himself in the most emphatic manner on the importance of keeping one's engagements that she could not resist the temptation to note what seemed a slight inconsistency in this case.

"Yes, Agnes, yes," he replied, folding his napkin wrong side out. "Your point is well taken; but, as they say in the offices, 'business is business,' and the man who allows his love of the theatre to interfere with his business is apt to get into difficulties."

"In other words, papa dear, you think there are exceptions to all rules. And so do I. You are certainly always right."

But Mr. Drayton did not feel quite so sure of this; and as he folded his paper and threw it on the side table, with a smile on his face, he felt that in this case the honors were with his playful daughter.

X

A Sick Call

A FEW mornings after the confidential interview in the doctor's library Fred was standing at the front window in the parlor gazing out listlessly at the passers-by. He had breakfasted alone. His father was out of town; his mother indisposed; Agnes — an unusual thing for her — was sleeping late; and Louis was absorbed in his studies, preparatory to examinations.

He had eaten little breakfast, had found the morning paper uninteresting, and was glad to light his cigar and go into the front room. As he stood at the window, Dr. Eaton passed. Fred tapped on the glass, to attract his attention, and waved him a "good-morning." The doctor returned his greeting, and was about to pass on, when suddenly he stopped, hesitated a moment, and then turned and ran up the steps. Fred was at the door

before he reached it, and extending his hand cordially, invited him to come in.

"Just a second, Fred. I am on my way to make a call, and it occurred to me, as I saw you at the window, that *just possibly* you might like to go along with me."

"Why, doctor, you interest me greatly. What is it, a case of amputation? Or has some poor fellow had his skull cracked by one of the Gannon family?"

"Not quite either, Fred," replied the doctor. "You have named the patient, but your diagnosis is incorrect. I am going to visit Joe Gannon's brother, and if you are disposed to go along, I am sure you will be interested."

"Well, doctor, I am with you; the house is very dull this morning and I am feeling stupid. Is the fellow seriously ill, or is it merely a case of 'drunk'?"

"It's a very serious case, Fred. Put on your coat and hat and I will tell you the particulars on our way."

As they reached the sidewalk, the doctor slipped his hand under his friend's arm and at once began his story.

"Mrs. Gannon is really a very estimable

woman. Her husband died about three years ago, and since then she has had a hard time of it trying to make the ends meet. Her eldest son, Joe, now, poor fellow, in state's prison, is a victim of the drink habit. He obtained a good common school education, learned the plumber's trade, at which he was quite proficient, and promised well. But it was the old story; he got into bad company, contracted a fondness for liquor, and went to the bad — especially after his father's death. His younger brother, Jim, is a splendid fellow, has supported his mother for the past three years, and has been a great comfort to her. He was a skilled machinist. Some two months ago he contracted a severe cold, which developed into pneumonia; and although he overcame the disease, it affected his heart, and left him in such a weak and prostrated condition that he has never rallied, and I fear he cannot live many days. His mother, who had been in the habit of going out 'by the day,' has been unable to leave him for several weeks, and they are consequently in very straitened circumstances. Indeed they have been saved from destitution only by the assistance of kind neighbors

and friends. The St. Vincent de Paul Conference of St. Stephen's Church is giving them weekly relief, and there are one or two Catholic ladies who call frequently and look after their wants. Jim doesn't know that his brother is in prison. His mother concealed the facts from him and made him believe that Joe had obtained work at some point up the river, several miles from New York — a veracious as well as skilful way, you will observe, of stating the situation. But here we are; you will see for yourself."

They entered one of the poorer class of tenement houses — of which there are so many in New York — on First Avenue; felt their way through dark, ill-smelling halls, up four flights of stairs to the top story, and knocked at one of the doors in the rear of the house. It was opened by a kindly looking, neatly dressed old woman, who greeted the doctor with a cordial "good-morning" and asked them both to come in. They entered the "family living-room" — which constituted the parlor, dining-room, and kitchen. The apartment consisted of this and two small adjoining sleeping-rooms, both of the latter being lighted and aired through the kitchen,

and from a small window in the further room, opening into a small shaft.

Everything about bespoke cleanliness and order — a condition which impressed the visitor the more remarkably, because of the compressed quarters and the extreme poverty which was apparent. On the mantelpiece there was a plaster figure of the Blessed Mother. On the walls were hung pictures representing the Last Supper, the martyrdom of St. Stephen, and St. Patrick. On a little table in the corner there was an old, well-worn Bible, a copy of the "Imitation," a "History of Ireland," and two small prayer books.

The doctor explained to Mr. Gannon that the gentleman with him was a friend, who would be glad to interest himself in Jim's case.

"Indeed then, doctor, if he's your friend it's quite enough. He's welcome in this house."

"And how's our sick boy?" inquired the physician.

"Well then doctor," she replied, "he had a very bad night, but he's resting quiet like now, thanks be to God, and I think he might be a bit better."

They passed through the first dark apartment into the little sleeping-room beyond. Although the one small window in this room opened into the air-shaft, being on the upper floor more light was had than on the lower stories. There are compensations in climbing, even in a tenement.

This was Jim's room. The doctor approached the bed in the corner, and taking the thin hand, that lay outside the coverlet, in his, said pleasantly: "Good-morning, Jim."

The head which had been turned a little towards the wall when they entered was now turned directly towards them. Fred's eyes met a sight which they had never before looked upon — the face of a dying man. He had entered this poverty-stricken little room with a feeling of trepidation, half fearing that he might meet with something that would shock or horrify him and make him anxious to hurry away. The effect upon him, in reality, was quite different from what he had anticipated.

The floor was indeed bare, except for a little piece of worn carpet near the bed; an exceedingly plain, cheap washstand in the corner, two rough wooden chairs, and a small

table completed the furniture of the chamber. But everything was as neat as wax; a simple little curtain was tastily looped back at the window, the washstand and table were both covered with spotless and freshly ironed bits of cambric, and the tumbler and pitcher and brass candlestick, though of the coarsest material, looked as though they had just been polished for the occasion.

"I have brought with me a very good friend of mine who wants to know you, Jim — Mr. Drayton."

The eyes that had been uplifted to see the doctor were now turned towards Fred, who stepped forward as the former drew back a little to make way. The face was pallid and extremely emaciated, but the eyes were large and lustrous. As Fred drew near, the sufferer gave him a smile, and the whole face was so lit up with a look of tenderness and sweet resignation that Fred spontaneously dropped on one knee, as if in the presence of something sacred, and stretching out his arm he said to Jim: "May I take your hand?" The latter lifted, evidently with some difficulty, a hand so wan and thin that it seemed to be merely a few articulated bones covered with bloodless

skin. As Fred pressed it gently in his, their eyes met — those of the wealthy, educated, refined "man of the world" and those of the poor, uneducated, lowly "son of toil." It was a momentary glance, but in it each recognized the brotherly love of the other — a love which counts no costs and hesitates at no sacrifice when the well-being of a brother is at stake.

"Are you suffering much, my good fellow?" asked Fred, still holding his hand.

"Oh no, not much," he replied in a weak voice, but with a smile. "I had rather a bad cough during the night, so that I didn't get much sleep; but I am better now. I'm worried about mother — dear, good mother," and his eyes glistened as he turned a look of tender sympathy towards the little woman who stood at the foot of the bed watching him.

"She's worn out — I'm sure she is — with watching and nursing me. I can't get her to go to her own bed and take the rest she needs and ought to have. Dear mother! if ever I get up out of this bed I'll work me hands off for you, and you shall have a comfortable home, you shall." He turned his face again

to the wall; and it was well, too, that he did so, for the tears were trickling down Mrs. Gannon's cheeks and there was something in Fred's eyes at that moment which he would have been ashamed to have anyone see. He looked straight ahead, as though he were experiencing no emotion whatever; but both of his hands held Gannon's now, and he cleared his throat with a sort of half-cough.

Poor, cowardly men that we are! How desperately we struggle against our own best emotions and strive to conceal them. How dreadful it seems to us that anyone should detect a tear in our eye!

"Jimmy thinks I'm running me feet off all the time, when I've just nothing to do at all but sit there like a lady and rest meself. Sure, Jimmy, it's lazy you'd make me. I think I'm getting too fond altogether of me sleep." She hadn't closed her eyes for more than fifteen minutes during the past twenty-four hours.

There was a knock at the door and Mrs. Gannon went out to answer it, wiping her cheeks and eyes as she did so. The doctor followed her to the outer room — the kitchen — and Fred was left alone with Jim. He

had recovered himself sufficiently to speak, and was on the point of asking some question, when he heard distinctly a sweet voice that he had never forgotten, although the tone now was quite different from that which had characterized it the first and only time he had ever heard it.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Gannon; good-morning, doctor. How's my dear patient to-day?"

"Ah! mavourneen, I'm glad to see you, dear. You're looking as bright as the morning and as sweet as a rose."

"Mrs. Gannon, you will positively spoil me with your blarney. Come, I won't listen to you." And she patted her affectionately on the cheek. "Doctor, how's our sick boy?"

"Walk right in and see for yourself," he replied.

Fred had heard every word that was uttered, and had become so nervous and excited that he seemed powerless to rise from his kneeling position. As Catherine reached the inner door, she stopped suddenly, and turning around arched her eyebrows with an inquiring look at the doctor, who had followed behind her. He smiled as he entered the little room ahead of her and called out: "Jim, Miss

Sidney is here and wants to know how you are this morning."

His words aroused Fred, who sprang to his feet and moved to one side, facing the newcomer. "Miss Sidney," said the doctor in a low tone of voice, "may I introduce to you my friend, Mr. Drayton?"

The recollection of their last meeting, that stormy night on Madison Avenue, flashed through both their minds, and the remarkable circumstances under which they now met again seemed so strange that, as their eyes met in mutual recognition and they bowed, there was a little embarrassment on both sides. But they both realized this was not the time or place to recall the earlier meeting.

Placing on the table a little package that she had brought with her, she went at once to the side of the bed and greeted the sick man in the most gracious manner.

Making an effort to raise both hands to welcome her, his face told unmistakably the happiness he felt in seeing her. Bending over him in a kindly manner, she took his hands in one of hers, laid the other on his forehead, and said to him in a cheerful voice: "Why, Jimmy, you are looking splendidly

this morning. Dr. Eaton's medicine is evidently doing you lots of good."

"Indeed, miss, I think it is so," he replied. "And then, why you're all so good and kind to me, I think I ought to get a good deal better, just to show you how much I thank you."

"Tut, tut, Jimmy, I've told you not to talk about that, and you must be obedient," she said, pressing the side of his head gently. "But I'm not going to remain this morning; I will call again later. I just ran in to leave a pot of wine jelly, which the doctor says you may have."

If Jim obeyed her injunction as to voicing his gratitude, his eyes told more plainly than any words could how pleased he was.

"Good-by. I shall see you soon again." She bowed to the others and left the room, followed by the doctor. She lingered in the front room, to learn from the latter just what the patient's condition was.

"I do not think," he said to her, "that Jim can hold out many days longer. The action of his heart is weak and his strength is failing. In the meantime we can only do what is possible to make him comfortable. We must look out, too, for that good woman, his mother.

She is taxing her powers, I fear, beyond endurance."

"What would you say to my calling in one of the sisters of Bon Secours to help Mrs. Gannon?" asked Catherine.

"Excellent idea," he replied. "But, Miss Sidney, where could she sleep? There is no cot—not so much as a comfortable chair for her to rest in." At this point Fred came out from the sickroom.

When Miss Sidney and the doctor had left him there, he turned to Mrs. Gannon and said: "Now, my dear madam, please tell me, what can I do for you?"

"Indeed, sir," she replied, "we have everything; everybody is so good and generous to us. God bless them."

"But I think I too can do a little something for Jim's comfort," said Fred," and I am sure you will allow me to do that." He approached the bed once more, and taking Jim's hand between his said: "Will you allow me to call again and see you? I want to know you better, and I shall be anxious to learn how you are." Jim answered him with a smile and a gentle pressure of his emaciated hand.

The doctor turned towards Fred as he

entered the room, and spoke as though he expected him to take part in the conversation.

"Miss Sidney," Fred approached and looked straight into her eyes as he spoke, "your little visit, it is plain to see, has done the invalid a great deal of good. He seems brighter, more cheerful, since you came in."

"Oh the poor boy!" she replied, "he is so grateful for anything done for him."

"Doctor," said Fred, "what is needed to make these people comfortable?"

The doctor told him what Catherine had suggested, and explained the necessity of an extra cot, or rocking-chair, for the accommodation of the nurse; adding that he thought there were a few other pieces that might add to the general comfort and good appearance of the apartment — as a lounge and table, an extra chair or two, some small rugs, etc.

"I will have them here before night," he replied. "Miss Sidney, I hope I may have the pleasure of meeting you again. Our sympathies are certainly enlisted in the same cause. Good-morning." And seizing his coat and hat and waving an *au revoir* to the doctor, he hurried off, as though he felt there was no time to lose.

XI

Blessed Charity

ABOUT the middle of the afternoon an express wagon stopped in front of the tenement house in which the Gannons lived. Stephen — a faithful and competent employé, who had lived for many years with the Drayton family — was waiting there for its arrival. Fred had instructed him to be there to assist in unloading the furniture and getting it properly placed in the Gannon apartment. He could not have given him a more congenial task, nor could he have found anyone more competent to execute it satisfactorily. Stephen had been for years a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference of St. Stephen's Church, on Twenty-eighth Street, which at the time was providing relief to Mrs. Gannon, although Fred was ignorant of this fact. He knew from his fellow Vincentians that Mrs. Gannon was a worthy woman, and he was

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secretly delighted to have the opportunity of helping her.

The expressman delivered a brass bedstead, with mattress and pillows, and a supply of bed linen and towels sufficient for a larger family than the Gannons. Nor had Fred's generosity stopped there. On his way to the store he had revolved the situation thoroughly in his mind, and as it was not his way to do things by halves, he had determined upon a long list of essentials for his new friends. It included a comfortable rocking-chair, a small table and washstand, with bowl and pitcher and soap, three pretty little rugs, and a supply of kitchen utensils, crockery, glass, etc. Indeed had Fred not realized the importance of hurrying, his list would have been considerably enlarged. And for that reason he had his purchases despatched by "special delivery."

When Stephen knocked at the Gannon apartment, the door was opened by Catherine Sidney, who had returned a few minutes before, bringing with her Sister Winifred, of Bon Secours.

As article after article was brought up and safely deposited in the kitchen, the two

ladies looked at each other with no less astonishment than delight. Mrs. Gannon had remained in the rear room with Jim, and the doors were closed. Stephen made himself very useful, as he danced about the room, opening packages, disposing of wrapping paper, etc., and his face fairly beamed with satisfaction as he contemplated the good things that were to add so much to the comfort of this poor family. When he had concluded such work as he could do, he immediately took his hat and started for the door. Hesitating there a moment, he turned to Miss Catherine and said: "Mr. Drayton instructed me to go to the butcher's and the grocer's and place a little order for things to be sent here. Perhaps, Miss, you would be pleased to make some suggestions. I am sure Mr. Fred would be glad to have you do so." And he took from his pocket a little slip of paper, on which were written the articles to be ordered. Catherine glanced it over and handed it back, saying: "No, I don't think it would be possible for me to improve on that list." She followed him to the hall, and then as he bowed respectfully and started to go down, she said to him, in a voice scarcely

above a whisper: "Please say to Mr. Drayton, for *me*, as well as for Mrs. Gannon and Jim, 'God bless you.'"

She turned quickly and returned to the room, while Stephen, still carrying his hat in his hand, descended to the street, feeling as proud and happy as though he were the bearer of important messages from a queen to a foreign ruler.

"Now, Sister Winifred," said Catherine, "I think one of us had better invite the lady of the house to come out and survey her riches." And stepping to the door of Jim's room, she tapped upon it gently and motioned to Mrs. Gannon to come out. When the good woman entered the kitchen, she looked about her for a few moments in bewilderment, as Catherine told her that Mr. Drayton had sent these things as a little present to her and Jim. Then going to the corner and seating herself in an old kitchen chair, she threw her apron up over her head, and covering her face with her hands, sobbed like a child. Catherine was at her side in a moment, and putting her arms around the good woman's head, caressed her tenderly.

"Now, Mrs. Gannon," she said, trying to

take the latter's hands from her face, "this is really very naughty of you; you ought to be delighted to have all these beautiful things for Jimmy's and your own comfort."

She dropped the apron from her face, and looking with a far-away stare towards the window, the tears still glistening on her cheeks, she said: "Dear Jimmy! God bless the dear boy — and God bless the kind gentleman that sent him all these beautiful things."

Thrice blessed charity! Blessed to him who receives, and doubly blessed to him who gives! Wit and wisdom, courage and skill, riches and power — to each we yield the brief homage of an hour, the tribute of a fleeting praise; each is honored by the careless, passing throng to-day, to be forgotten ere the morrow. But sweet charity, which "envieth not" and "seeketh not her own," that reflected light in human hearts of eternal love, shrinking from vulgar gaze, and seeking to be unknown, awakens a song of praise amidst the angels of God. It descends like dew from the skies upon the flowers of earth, to be reclaimed by the rays of the Eternal Sun to heaven.

There was more than one heart made happier that night, more than one soul brought nearer to God by this outburst of brotherly love, this act of sweet charity. The few waning hours of a dying man were made happier; a loving mother at his bedside slept peacefully for the first time in many days, saying as she laid her tired head on the pillow, "How good everybody is to us—God bless them"; Catherine Sidney sat for at least half an hour at her piano that evening, and the sweet expression of her music was but the outpouring of a soul filled with tender emotion.

And Fred Drayton? Well — in spite of the sadness which he felt, when he thought of poor, suffering Jim Gannon and his devoted mother — his heart was very light, and he was so gay and frolicsome all the evening that Agnes, to whom he had not yet mentioned anything of what had happened, told him several times that he was a "perfect goose."

When he went to bed that night, he was probably the happiest man in New York.

XII

A Challenge

THE following evening Fred and Agnes attended a social function which the latter had been anticipating with more than usual interest. It was a reception and dance at Mrs. Trumbull's. Such occasions were generally a bore to her; the conventional formalities imposed upon her were oppressive; and what seemed the extravagant conceit of many whom she met at such affairs annoyed and disgusted her. For some reason, however, which she hardly allowed herself to think much about, she felt quite sure that she should enjoy this particular occasion, and had several times spoken of how delightfully Mrs. Trumbull always entertained.

Mrs. Drayton was greatly pleased at seeing Agnes really interested in what she was to wear; and when she questioned the maid who was assisting her, as to which of several ornaments was most becoming to her, her mother

flattered herself that her frequent suggestions had not, after all, been entirely lost upon Agnes.

The reception was a brilliant affair. The Trumbull mansion was large, and the rooms and halls beautifully arranged for such occasions, and Agnes was quite right in saying that Mrs. Trumbull always entertained handsomely.

The parlors were filled when Fred and Agnes arrived — much to their satisfaction, as they were relieved of the embarrassment which they might have experienced had their entrance been more noticeable.

Mrs. Trumbull and Mary received them cordially, and Mary whispered something into Agnes' ear, which made her eyes sparkle and brought a little color to her cheeks, as she gave one of her merry, hearty laughs. As Fred was speaking with Mrs. Trumbull, he did not hear all that was said; but he caught the words, "He's dying to see you again."

"Now, Mr. Drayton," said Mary, "if you will escort Agnes to the west parlor, you will find, I think, near the entrance to the conservatory, a number of our mutual friends, who will be glad to see you. Don't forget,

Mr. Drayton, that I have quite set my heart on that promised horseback ride."

"You can't anticipate it with more pleasure than I do, Miss Trumbull," replied Fred, as he led his sister away.

As they made their way through the halls to the west parlor, they met and exchanged a few pleasant words with several acquaintances; among whom were two or three gentlemen of considerable financial prominence and a number of ladies who were recognized social leaders in New York. As they were nearing the conservatory, at the rear of the house, Agnes put her hand once or twice to her head, evidently to assure herself that her hair was just as it should be. Fred had often noticed other ladies doing this, and had criticised the habit strongly; he had never seen Agnes do it before. "What is the matter with your head, Agnes?" he said. "Are you trying to see whether it has grown any since Miss Mary whispered in your ear?"

"No, dearie," she replied, with a good-natured glance at him, "I was just feeling to see whether any of the wisdom which you have so carefully planted has begun to sprout."

"Hello, Fred," exclaimed a voice at his right. "Good-evening, Miss Agnes. I am delighted to see you both." It was his friend, Charley Spencer.

A few steps further brought them to the group for which they were aiming — a dozen or more intimate friends, who just then were laughing heartily at some funny story that Lieutenant Hazleton had told them of his recent experiences on a Western ranch. The Draytons were greeted cordially, and some of the lieutenant's comical experiences were gone over again, with suggestions here and there from the young wits of the party, to emphasize the funny points.

As the conversation became more general, the young officer made his way near to Agnes, and expressed his great pleasure at meeting her again. When he referred to his "awkward attempt" to escort her from the door of the theatre to her carriage, she burst into such a hearty laugh that for a moment she feared again that she might have offended him. All such thought, however, quickly vanished when he assured her that it had been the pleasantest evening he had spent since his return to New York.

Presently the dancing began, and the lieutenant invited her to the ballroom, where they were soon lost in the mazes of a fascinating waltz. They were both good dancers and both enjoyed it intensely.

From the ballroom they found their way to the conservatory, a dreamland of exquisite floral beauty and fragrance. At the extreme end of this apartment there was, on one side, a little recess, or niche — it was called "the horseshoe bower" — surrounded by ferns and palms and filled with flowering plants. A very pretty and comfortable rustic bench offered an attractive retreat for anyone — or two — just a little apart from the gay throng. The lieutenant had been there and was familiar with its attractions. Agnes had not noticed it before, and when her companion invited her to enter and sit down, she hesitated — just a moment—and then with a quick, impulsive movement, caught up her skirts, passed in, and sat down.

"Oh isn't this perfectly charming!" she exclaimed, wondering what her mother would say, if she were there. But her mother was *not* there, nor anyone else, except a young gentleman who was making himself very

agreeable, and who also found the situation "perfectly charming."

"You are evidently fond of flowers, Miss Drayton," he said.

"Can you imagine anyone being otherwise?" she replied. "But to me the sweetest flowers are those that are gathered in the woods and fields — in the early morning, while they are yet moist with the dew — in the month of June."

"Your description certainly presents a very fascinating picture, Miss Drayton. Do you often indulge in these early morning excursions?"

"Indeed I do, while we are at our country home in summer. I am always in the saddle at seven o'clock, when the weather is not stormy, racing across the country, bareheaded — just having a glorious time. And I think Kitty — that's my pet horse's name — enjoys it as much as I do." She threw her head back and laughed merrily as she thought of it.

"And is Kitty the only one to share the enjoyment of these morning outings with you?"

"Oh no. I am often alone; that is, at least,

when I start out. My younger brother sometimes goes along when he doesn't oversleep or isn't too lazy to get up in season. Louis is the dearest, best brother in the world, but he *does* hate to get up early in the morning. I simply love it. The country is never so beautiful to me as in the early hours of the day, when the air is fresh and cool and the woods and fields are fragrant with the sweet scent of flowers and resonant with the merry songs of the birds. When Kitty and I start off alone, Meg — that is Louis' pony, who is always made ready for him these mornings — lifts her head and works her ears and watches us, positively with a look of envy, as she is led back to the barn." Her listener looked as though he sympathized with Meg.

"And then," he said, "when Master Louis is indulging in his morning nap and Meg is so cruelly disappointed, you make these early excursions all alone?"

"No, not always," she replied. "A friend of ours — that is, a friend of Fred's — whose father has a beautiful country place about a mile from ours, sometimes joins me on these morning trips." Had she been looking towards him at this moment, she would have

perceived that the smile which he had worn all through her enthusiastic narrative was not now so noticeable. But as she replied to his last question, her eyes were cast downward, and she spoke in a lower tone of voice, as if less interested.

In a moment, however, she looked up again with a smile and said: "Even when I have an escort — whether my brother Louis or Mr. Davidge — I am alone a good part of the time, for Kitty loves to show her heels to everybody on the road; and when it comes to clearing brooks and fences, she stops at nothing, while the other horses sometimes balk, and have to be taken the long way around. This gives me an opportunity to pick flowers, and Kitty to nibble the fresh grass."

"I hope that some day I may have the pleasure of joining you in one of those morning excursions, Miss Drayton," he said earnestly.

"Why, that would be delightful," she exclaimed with the utmost simplicity — quite forgetting that her mother might wish to be consulted in the matter. "Are you really fond of riding, Lieutenant Hazelton?"

"Indeed I am very fond of it, when I have real good company. And I can conceive of nothing more fascinating than a morning ride across country with you, Miss Drayton. I promise you, you would not be left alone for one little moment at any point of the trip." She gave him a glance half-defiant and said with a little toss of her head: "You may not find it so easy, sir; Kitty sets a pace, I assure you, that not many horses care to attempt. There's nothing in that part of the country that can follow her."

The lieutenant was charmed by her enthusiastic assurance — her confidence in Kitty's ability to distance all competitors — and he accepted it as a challenge.

During the conversation he had plucked from a bank of flowers directly behind them a little spray of heliotrope and forget-me-nots. Leaning over towards her, with an expression of profound admiration, he said: "Miss Drayton, I beg you will accept these flowers as a pledge of my intention." She raised her eyes and met his look calmly — just for an instant — then sprang to her feet in a startled way. "A pledge of *what?*" she exclaimed. He had risen with her, fearing

that his words, or his manner, had been indiscreet.

"Why, Miss Drayton," he said assuringly, "that Prince and I — that is my best horse — that Prince and I engage to follow you and Kitty, *pari passu*, over hill and dale, hedge and stream, if you will give us the opportunity, and will be in with you at the finish."

"Good," she said, in a defiant little manner, and receiving the flowers from him, with naïve simplicity attached them to the left side of her waist. "I accept it, then, as an engagement."

The last words were spoken with emphasis, and loud enough to be heard at some distance. She had scarce uttered them when they were both startled by hearing the rustling of silk and footsteps approaching. They turned quickly, and at the entrance of the little enclosure were confronted by Fred Drayton and Mary Trumbull.

"Oh you runaways!" exclaimed the latter, "I thought we should find you here." And turning to Fred, she explained: "Cousin George thinks this is the most fascinating spot in the house."

"So it is," replied the lieutenant, "and never more so than to-night."

"And what were you children discussing with so much animation? Solon Shingle, I suppose, and that wonderful 'bar'l of apple sass.'" With this last query she turned an arch glance at the lieutenant, which he perfectly understood. He looked a little embarrassed, and would perhaps have displayed some nervousness in his reply had not Agnes, whose cheeks were still flushed, burst into a peal of hearty laughter, as she clutched Miss Trumbull's arm. "Oh Mary! did you ever hear anything more deliciously absurd in your life than that comical old farmer? John Owens is perfectly overpowering in that ridiculous character."

Fred joined in the laugh, though he had not seen the play. "Evidently," he said, "there is something fascinating for me to look forward to. But, lieutenant, I thought you were a devotee of the terpsichorean muse. Why have you and Agnes forsaken the ballroom?"

"My dear Fred, I prefer a dance to anything in the world — except a cross-country ride; and to-night I was irresistibly drawn to 'the horseshoe.'"

"Well, come," said Mary, "let us wend our way back to the parlor. There are hosts of friends there, I know, who are anxious to see you all."

There was more dancing, several set pieces of instrumental and vocal music, and the supper menu was elaborate, and of course delicious. But our young friends saw little more of each other during the evening.

As the Draytons were about to bid "good-night" to their hostess, the lieutenant approached Agnes and said: "Miss Drayton, I hope I may be permitted to call upon you. We shall have to perfect arrangements, you know, for the contest to which Prince and I have been challenged."

"We shall all be delighted to see you, Lieutenant Hazelton," she replied.

As Mary said, "Bon soir, ma chère," she gave Agnes a knowing smile and whispered in her ear, "Is it all settled *so soon?*" Agnes merely replied, as she squeezed her hand: "Oh you little goose!" And then in a tone of mock seriousness she added: "If you will behave yourself, sometime, perhaps, I will tell you all about it."

Fred's sister expected to "hear" from him when they were alone; and she wasn't disappointed. Agnes had been the recipient of a good deal of attention, but had always seemed cruelly indifferent to her gentlemen admirers. When they approached her with what she called their silly speeches, she laughed at them so heartily that they lost courage and changed their tactics. She was quick at repartee, full of wit and humor, and enjoyed a lively conversation with her young friends. But she detested flattery and did not hesitate to make that fact known. Fred naturally admired her independence. When she ridiculed the pretty speeches of some of his intimate friends, he laughingly called her a "man-hater" — which he knew perfectly well she was not.

When they started home, Fred sat back in the corner of the carriage, without saying a word, until Agnes, knowing that the ice must be broken, said: "Well, Freddie boy, how did you enjoy yourself?" "Tolerably," he replied. "But, Agnes, what possessed you to-night? You surprised me very much."

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean that I was dumbfounded, as I am sure Miss Mary must have been, at finding you and Lieutenant Hazelton all by yourselves, in a retired part of the conservatory, engaged in a tête-à-tête like two silly lovers. And your manner, and the words we overheard as we approached you, indicated that there was something very serious under consideration at that moment."

Agnes burst out laughing as she seized Fred's hand, and giving it a hard shake looked into his face and said: "Why, you dear, innocent creature, we were talking about nothing more serious than our horses and a prospective horseback ride."

"Very extraordinary, Agnes, very extraordinary indeed, that the discussion of such a subject should induce you to accept the floral offering of a young gentleman, and placing it conspicuously as near your heart as you could, assure him, with flushed cheeks, that you *accepted it as an engagement.*"

She was startled by his words. They suggested thoughts to her mind which she was unwilling to entertain. Yet she realized, as he spoke, not only that the situation in which they were found justified his anxiety,

but — something told her — that she had been treading upon dangerous ground. She was glad that the light was not sufficient to permit Fred to see her face, for she knew it would reveal much more than she was willing he should know. She quickly recovered her equanimity, however, and had her feelings sufficiently under control to speak calmly.

"My dear brother," she said, laying her hand gently upon his arm, "you have been completely deceived. It is all a mistake, absurd, and laughable, as you will see when I explain it to you, and yet quite natural, as I realize, under the circumstances which you describe. We had been talking about cross-country riding. I had boasted of Kitty's prowess in the field, and when Lieutenant Hazelton expressed the hope that he might join us on some of our morning rides, I told him that Kitty had a way of showing her heels to everything on the road, and that I did not think he could find a horse in our part of the country that could follow us. He was amused at my assurance and told me that he, too, had a splendid rider, named Prince, whom he was willing to pit against my pony. He handed me a few flowers that

he had picked, as a little pledge that he would accept my challenge, as he called it; saying, 'Prince and I engage to follow you and Kitty over hill and dale, and to be in at the finish.' I laughingly took the little boutonnière, saying, 'I accept it as an engagement.' At that moment, my dear Freddie, you and Mary surprised us. *Voilà le dénouement.*"

The carriage stopped, the footman opened the door, and they entered the house together without further words. Fred was greatly relieved by the explanation she had given him, and when he bade her "good-night" in the hall, he smiled and gave her an affectionate brotherly kiss.

Agnes was not altogether satisfied with herself. She had told the truth certainly — she would scorn to do otherwise; nothing which she had said was of itself calculated to deceive her brother; and yet, somehow, she felt that she was playing the hypocrite. Had Fred possessed a woman's wit, he would have detected in her manner and expression, especially as she bade him "good-night," an indescribable something — whether it was shyness or absence of entire frankness — not altogether natural to his ingenuous sister.

She hurried to her room, locked the door, and stood for a moment looking about her. What had happened? She had been away but a few hours; everything was just as she left it; and yet, somehow, things did appear a little strangely to her. She was happy — so happy, indeed, that were it not for the fear of disturbing others at that hour, she would probably have given vent to her feelings by singing, as she so often did. But with this pleasurable sensation there was a feverish excitement, a subconscious agitation — she assured herself it was only nervousness — quite unusual in Agnes Drayton.

She threw off her wraps and stood before the mirror. There were the flowers, a pledge of something, resting, as Fred had said, close to her heart. She unfastened the little bouquet and held it to her nose. The fragrance seemed very sweet to her. And now — was she quite unconscious of what she was doing? — she pressed the flowers to her lips.

"I wonder," she said to herself, "what these sweet little flowers mean?" Poor little hypocrite, trying to deceive herself. The language of flowers was an open book to her; she had no need to ask herself such an idle

question. Nevertheless she drew from its place on the shelf her floral *vade mecum*, and turning the leaves over seriously, she read:

LANGUAGE OF FLOWERS

HELIOTROPE . . . . . *Devotion*
FORGET-ME-NOT . . . . *True Love*

She smiled as though she had made some unexpected but pleasant discovery. Seating herself at the end of the sofa, she threw her head back, and closing her eyes tried to think over all the events of the evening. She was soon asleep. And she dreamed that she was riding across the fields, and over the hills, far away. The meadows were covered with forget-me-nots; the air was fragrant with the sweet perfume of heliotrope, and the birds were singing merrily. As she rode on, enjoying everything intensely, she saw that they were approaching a stone wall, higher than anything they had ever undertaken. Nevertheless she was fearless, and Kitty responded eagerly to the gentle touch of the whip. As she drew near she heard the sounds of some one rapidly approaching from behind, and in a moment a young military officer, mounted on a superb horse, dashed by and cleared the

wall. The incident seemed to confuse Kitty, as well as her rider, for when she made her leap she miscalculated the height, struck the top stones, and was thrown forward. Agnes — as it seemed to her — was hurled into the air and, as she fell, was caught and saved from injury by — Lieutenant Hazelton.

She awoke from her sleep with a start. She had fallen over onto the sofa pillows, still clutching her riding whip — that is, her little bouquet — tightly in her hand. She sprang to her feet and looked about the room confusedly, feeling certain that there was some one near. But she was mistaken; she was alone. The lights were turned up high and Dick, her canary bird, was singing lustily.

XIII

An Inner Voice

AGNES rose late the following morning, feeling only half rested, after a night of disturbed sleep. She made her toilet in a perfunctory sort of way, tipped over a bottle of perfume on her bureau, smashed a tumbler on her washstand, and met with one or two other accidents before she was ready to go downstairs. She was thinking over, all the time she was dressing, the occurrences of the previous evening, and becoming more critical of her own conduct. Finally, when she picked up her handkerchief from the table, she uncovered the little bouquet of wilted flowers. She looked at them for a moment, hesitated, and took a long breath, the suggestion of a sigh. Then tapping the floor with her foot, she faced herself in the mirror.

"Agnes Drayton," she muttered aloud to

herself, "if you think I'm going to make a goose of myself, you're mistaken." And picking up the faded bunch of flowers, she threw them across the room into the waste-basket. Then she started downstairs, singing at the top of her voice.

She tried to interest herself in the morning paper, but found it stupid. After breakfast she sat down to the piano; but everything she played sounded flat and insipid. When she went to drive with her mother, and the latter inquired how she had enjoyed the entertainment last evening, she replied that, like all such affairs, it was very pretty, but rather *ennuyant.*

Agnes realized that she was a little upset, or crotchety, as she called it, and was relieved when Fred told her at the lunch table that he was going around that afternoon to see his invalid friend, Jim Gannon, and asked if she would like to go along. She gladly accepted, and an hour later was wending her way through the dark halls and climbing the narrow stairs of a tenement house, for the first time in her life. Fred had called once before since his first visit there with Dr. Eaton; and when Mrs. Gannon opened the

door, he was warmly welcomed. She waited for no introduction, but took Agnes kindly by the hand and said: "I am sure this is the dear sister Mr. Drayton spoke about. Indeed, Miss Agnes, I should know you anywhere for your brother's own sister. Sure, you're like twins."

"Oh Mrs. Gannon, you flatter me," Agnes replied.

"Well, then, that wasn't my intention at all. Rather I meant to pay a compliment to Mr. Drayton. And indeed he deserves more than I can give him."

"Mrs. Gannon," said Fred, "I'm afraid you will spoil both of us, if we listen to you. Tell me, how is the sick boy?"

"Well, here comes Sister Winifred, and I'll let her tell you all about him."

As the sister entered the room, Fred and Agnes both rose. Fred greeted her respectfully and introduced his sister. She begged them both to be seated, and placed them quickly at their ease by her frank and cheerful manner. She told them that Jim was holding his own fairly well, and although suffering a good deal of pain at times, was always uncomplaining. "Would you like to

go in and see him? I am sure he would be glad to have you."

They followed her quietly to the sick chamber, where Fred at once approached the little cot in the corner, and dropping on one knee, took the invalid's hand and said: "Jim, my dear fellow, how are you feeling to-day?"

"Fine, Mr. Drayton," he replied. "I hope you are quite well yourself."

Agnes stood back a little distance, by the side of Sister Winifred. It had required a bit of courage on her part to enter this strange place, to come in contact with scenes so unfamiliar to her. She knew that Fred was interested in this family and in some way had aided them, but she had no idea that he was on such intimate terms with them. When she saw her brother kneeling at the bedside of this poor man, she was amazed at first, but quickly realized the truth of the situation, and was irresistibly drawn to approach nearer herself. Fred heard her coming, and moving a little to one side made way for her. "Jim," he said, "this is my sister, Miss Agnes."

As he turned his large bright eyes towards

her, with a pleasant smile, Agnes dropped on her knees — she said afterwards that she couldn't help it, if she had tried — and took the hand which Fred still held.

"Jim," she said, "I am really very glad to see you, and am so sorry that you are not feeling well. I have heard my brother speak often of you. I wish we might do something to make you better."

"Thank you, ma'am; it's very kind of you. Everybody's so good to us, and Mr. Drayton has been a brother like to me — God bless him."

"And, Jim," broke in Agnes, "I'm going to be a sister like to you, if you will let me."

While this little scene was going on in the sickroom, Mrs. Gannon had opened the kitchen door in response to a gentle knock. "Mavourneen, mavourneen," she exclaimed, "I am glad indeed to see you; you are just here betimes." And after a few words she led Miss Catherine Sidney quietly through to the rear room. Catherine stood for a moment at the door, beheld brother and sister kneeling together at the bedside of the dying man, and turned back, lest she should disturb them.

In a few minutes Sister Winifred came out, bringing Fred and Agnes with her. Fred introduced his sister, and the young ladies seated themselves side by side on the little kitchen lounge — one of Fred's contributions — and immediately engaged in an animated conversation. Each of course studied the other earnestly, and each felt intuitively that the other was engaged in just that study. The result was evidently satisfactory to both parties, for in a few minutes they were talking as intimately as though they had been old friends. Fred in the meantime was standing, conversing with Sister Winifred. But his frequent glances to the left, and his somewhat abstracted manner, told her plainly that he was listening to their conversation, as far as he could do so without being rude to her. So she presently excused herself on the plea that she was needed in the other room.

"Now, Miss Sidney, tell me frankly, what can I do to help this poor family?" Agnes inquired.

"Well really, Miss Drayton," she replied, "your brother has been so generous that there seems little left for anyone else to do."

As she glanced at Fred, she noticed a slight frown on his face, and at once concluded that further remarks in this direction would be distasteful to him.

"However," she continued, "I will tell you what I think would be a real charity. Mrs. Gannon herself is in sore need of suitable clothing. I am myself knitting a simple little shawl for her, to wear over her shoulders at night, when she relieves Sister Winifred in the sickroom. And I am sure her general wardrobe — although she appears so neat and presentable always — is sadly in need of replenishing."

"That will give me just the opportunity I want," replied Agnes. "But, Miss Sidney, I shall have to work under your advice and direction. I should not know myself just where or how to begin."

"Oh my dear, there won't be the slightest difficulty about that, I assure you," said Catherine. "We will help each other in the good work."

"Miss Sidney, may I call upon you?" Agnes asked. "I shall want your assistance in this matter, and I feel, too, that I must know you better."

"I shall certainly be most happy to see you any time," she replied, laying her hand upon Agnes' arm, "and I know we shall become very good friends. I will try to find out this morning, without being too inquisitive, just what Mrs. Gannon's needs are, and then we shall know what to do."

"If it is convenient, then, to you, I will call to-morrow," said Agnes, as she rose and extended both hands to say "good-afternoon." "Freddie," turning to her brother, "you're an outsider in this little affair. You've had your innings here, and it's my turn now."

With a pleasant parting word, Catherine turned and went to the sickroom. Mrs. Gannon and Sister Winifred both came out and exchanged a few words with Fred and Agnes before they left.

As they reached the street and started homeward, Agnes turned to her brother and said: "Well, Fred, I think Catherine Sidney is one of the sweetest women I ever met in my life."

Fred turned to her with an appreciative smile, making, however, no reply, and then looked quite serious, as though he felt unconcerned in the matter. But his very silence

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— forced, as she knew it was, when of course he was dying to say a whole lot — told her that he was in perfect sympathy with her on this point, and that her praise of Catherine had struck a very responsive chord in his heart.

There are events in our lives — often seemingly trivial — which mould our characters and shape our ends. They come perhaps unexpectedly, and pass before we realize their meaning or influence. But they plant in our hearts and souls seed which fructifies the rest of our lives — for good or evil.

The events of last evening and to-day, the one following so closely upon the other, wrought a change in the life and character of Agnes Drayton. The first revealed to her hidden recesses of her heart, which she had not known, or had ignored. The second awakened within her soul latent powers, which exerted a lasting influence upon her after-life.

XIV

The First Call

THE following afternoon Agnes called, as she had promised, on Catherine Sidney. As the carriage stopped in front of the house on Lexington Avenue, she surveyed the block somewhat critically, and saw nothing especially to admire in the surroundings. The house in which the Sidneys lived was an unpretentious brick dwelling, with green blinds at all the windows and a light iron balustrade flanking the steps leading to the front door. The contrast between this and the houses she was familiar with on Fifth and Madison Avenues was noticeable, and affected her somewhat unpleasantly at first. Her impressions upon entering the house and being ushered into the parlor were still more striking, but of quite a different character.

Simplicity was apparent on all sides. The extravagant luxury which distinguishes the

houses of the wealthy was wanting here. But she recognized at once, all about her, the evidences of good taste and a certain atmosphere of refinement, not inferior to anything she had met with in the more stately mansions. In none of them certainly had she seen a more artistic setting of little things — that indescribable "finishing touch" which makes the house beautiful and the home attractive, and invites to cheerful rest. She had not much time to examine her surroundings, but noticed with special interest an open parlor-grand piano, with cabinet adjoining, and a profusion of loose music distributed about, which indicated that the instrument had been recently in use.

Catherine entered the room almost immediately, and greeted Agnes with an ease and cordiality of manner which eschewed all unnecessary formalities and bespoke mutual confidence.

"O Miss Sidney, what a beautiful home you have!" exclaimed Agnes.

"It is very sweet of you to say so, Miss Drayton," Catherine replied. "If you admire absolute simplicity, you will appreciate, I am sure, our modest quarters."

"Why, I am simply charmed with everything," said Agnes. "And you are evidently devoted to music, I see."

"Yes, I am fond of it, and often find a good deal of consolation at the piano. And then, as I have two or three pupils, it is quite necessary for me to keep my hand in practice. And you? you play, I presume."

"Oh yes, I make an effort sometimes to be musical; but I don't practise much, and as a result generally feel quite rusty."

"I am very glad that you are musical," said Catherine. "It will be, I am sure, another sweet chord of sympathy between us. Mother would have come down with me, for she is very anxious to meet you; but she is not feeling quite well, and I persuaded her to remain in her room to-day."

After a little further conversation, of a personal character, Agnes asked: "What discovery did you make, Miss Sidney, regarding Mrs. Gannon's wants?"

"Well, to tell the truth, it is much as I had feared; she is in absolute want of practically everything in the way of clothing."

Details were then entered into which need not be specifically recorded here. Suffice it

to say, the list which they agreed upon was a somewhat lengthy one. During the conversation Agnes discovered that the Gannons were not the only poor family that Catherine was in the habit of visiting and helping. This information came out accidentally, but all the more forcibly therefor, and Agnes made a mental note of it, determined that she would learn more later on.

"Now, Miss Sidney, it seems to me the sooner this distressing situation is relieved the better. I suggest that we go down town immediately — my carriage is waiting at the door — and select what is needed. We have an account with two or three houses, which could supply us undoubtedly with all that is wanted, and we might bring the things directly home with us."

Catherine was delighted with Agnes' enthusiasm, as well as at the thought of giving solid comfort to poor Mrs. Gannon. She lost no time in making herself ready for the trip, and in a few minutes they were rumbling down Broadway. Department stores in those days had not generally developed into the great marts they have since become, and it was therefore necessary for

them to visit two or three establishments before they found all they wanted.

"Shopping," to be sure, is fatiguing work, but there is a fascination about it for most women, and two good hours were spent by our young friends on this interesting occasion, which, it is safe to say, they thoroughly enjoyed. They were certainly better acquainted when they parted that evening, and their first mutual impressions were confirmed. Their "good-night" was simply *au revoir* to the following afternoon, when Agnes was to call again on Lexington Avenue, and together they were to visit their poor protégés on their charitable errand.

Agnes was very talkative that evening and Fred was a good listener. He was greatly interested, of course, in what she had to tell him, but, more than this, Agnes herself was an interesting study to him. It occurred to him that there was something unusual, or perhaps more than usual, in her manner. It was not that his sister had lost any of her charming vivacity or gayety of spirit; indeed she displayed more than usually these traits of her character. But there was an earnestness and intensity in her speech and manner that did not escape

Fred's attention. He was the more open to this impression, because the same influences were acting in and upon him as upon his sister. They had both but recently felt the touch of "that immortal fire" which sooner or later is enkindled in every human heart. And in the same hour, as it were, there had been awakened in their souls, by the sight of the heroic sufferings and placid resignation of fellowman, that sweet spirit which is "patient," is "kind," "seeketh not her own," and "beareth all things," and which among the Christian virtues was called "the greater."

And so there had grown up between brother and sister this half-hidden bond of sympathy — a condition of heart and soul which each would conceal from the other, yet made mutual interpretation natural.

Fred puffed vigorously at his cigar when Agnes said: "Freddie, I asked Miss Sidney if I might bring you around some evening to call on her. She replied: 'Why certainly; we shall all be most happy to see Mr. Drayton.' And she spoke, too, as though she meant every word of it."

Fred at once took a mental resolution that

no unnecessary time should be lost in accepting that invitation.

The following afternoon Catherine and Agnes drove around to First Avenue and delivered the purchases they had made to Mrs. Gannon. It was necessary to call for Stephen's help again in handling the precious bundles, and he had to make more than one trip up the long stairs before the articles all reached their destination.

Agnes had often experienced the delight of giving happiness to others; but as she stood there now in the kitchen of the poor, afflicted widow, she thought she had never before quite realized what it was. She certainly had never witnessed a more sincere display of gratitude than that which was poured out upon them by Mrs. Gannon.

She asked if Jim was well enough to see her. Sister Winifred, who had joined the little surprise party in the kitchen, replied: "Why certainly, Miss Drayton; come right in."

Agnes went directly to the bedside, and kneeling there took the dying man's hand as she had done before. He turned towards her the same bright smile and look of resig-

nation which had edified her so deeply on her first visit. But his face appeared, if anything, more emaciated, and his voice was only a faint whisper as he uttered his "God bless you." It was, in fact, the last time that Agnes saw Jim Gannon.

XV

A Musical Soirée

A FEW evenings after the visit to First Avenue, Fred and Agnes called on Miss Catherine Sidney. She was expecting them, as the young ladies had previously fixed upon this evening for the call. Fred and his sister were introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Sidney, who received them courteously and joined heartily in the conversation of the young people.

Mr. Sidney was a literary man; less versed in the practical affairs of the new world than in the educational and sociological questions of the day; more interested in subjects discussed in the reviews than in those which filled the news and society columns of the daily press. Withal, he was fond of a good story, and never lost the opportunity of illustrating his point by the recital of some interesting anecdote. Mrs. Sidney, on the other hand, was eminently practical, cheerful in

disposition, and, as her husband used to say of her, always equal to an emergency. Their circumstances of late years had not permitted her to enjoy much of social life; but by those who knew her she was esteemed highly, and her limited circle of friends was select.

"Mother," said Miss Catherine, "Mr. Drayton, as you know, is the gentleman who so kindly took me to Dr. Eaton's door, and then saw me safely home, that terribly stormy night, when father was so ill." And turning to Fred, she spoke very earnestly, but in an embarrassed manner, "Mr. Drayton, I have not before had the opportunity of thanking you as I wanted to for coming out that awful night, and showing me the way through the blinding snow to the doctor's office, and then escorting me home. I was mortified when I thought afterwards of my boldness in knocking on the window of your house at one o'clock in the morning and interrupting your festivities. I wonder you didn't take me for an escaped lunatic; and indeed, with an old shawl over my head and covered with snow, I must have looked like an erratic creature."

"Miss Sidney, I assure you it gave me more

pleasure than you can imagine. I enjoy a snowstorm immensely, and my outing that night was one that I shall always remember pleasantly."

He was conscious, as he made this last remark, that Agnes was looking at him out of the corner of her eyes, and he did not dare to turn towards her; he knew she would burst out laughing if he did. But, anxious at once to change the subject of their conversation, he continued: "Agnes tells me, Miss Sidney, that you and she have engaged in some excellent missionary work this past week."

"I can claim very little merit in that good work," she replied. "Your amiable sister deserves all; I was but a poor assistant. But our work, Mr. Drayton, should hardly be mentioned in the same category with your generous action in behalf of the same poor people. You cannot realize how much real comfort you have given them. The furniture which you sent made it possible to have Sister Winifred there, and enabled poor Mrs. Gannon to rest at night."

Agnes was looking again at her brother, but this time with her eyes wide open and

her eyebrows raised in an inquisitive way — he had never told her what he had done for these poor people. Fred felt like screaming, and with an imploring look at Miss Catherine, tried once more to divert the conversation into other channels.

"Sister Winifred seems to be a very competent nurse," he remarked, "and a very lovable woman."

"She certainly is," replied Catherine. "She has been an angel to Mrs. Gannon. That poor woman has gone through a great deal of suffering during the past year. She nursed her husband through a long siege of illness and was much prostrated by his death. Shortly after, her eldest son, Joe, who had been her chief support, took to drink, lost his place, and then got into some disgraceful scrape a few weeks ago — I think it was the same night father was so ill and I went for the doctor — the result of which was that he was sent to state's prison."

Once more Agnes' expressive face was a study. But this time it wore a look of comical surprise, as she glanced from Miss Sidney to her brother. Catherine noticed the look of surprise, and was a little disconcerted

by it, but continued: "So the mother's means of support was completely cut off. Her younger son, Jim, was bedridden, and so ill that his mother could not leave him. Had it not been for the assistance she received from the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the help of a few friends and neighbors, they would simply have starved."

During this last remark Fred had been signalling vigorously with his eyes to Agnes, and she correctly interpreted his meaning to be: "Don't say a word about it." But their looks had not escaped Catherine's attention. And after a moment of rather awkward silence, she turned abruptly to Agnes and said: "Do you know what it was that sent Joe Gannon to prison?"

Agnes answered quietly: "Highway robbery."

She started, and looking earnestly at Fred, asked in a tone that insisted upon an answer: "Mr. Drayton, who was the victim of Joe's crime?"

"A friend of ours," he replied promptly, "who happened to be returning home late that night."

"And may I know his name?" she con-

tinued, eyeing him sharply, her face now pale.

Agnes glanced at her brother; his eyes were cast down, and he seemed uncertain just how to answer. "O Fred," she exclaimed, "why shouldn't Miss Sidney know that you were the recipient of Joe Gannon's attentions that night?"

"And it was after you left me here at our door and were returning home," Catherine said, in a voice scarcely above a whisper; and she covered her face with her hands.

Agnes and Fred both rose to their feet. Agnes walked directly over to Catherine's side, and grasping her wrists, drew her hands from her face. "My dear Miss Catherine," she said, looking affectionately into her eyes — it was the first time she had addressed her by that name — "don't give yourself one moment of uneasiness about that little affair. So long as Fred wasn't killed, or even seriously injured, I am almost glad that it all happened just as it did, for it gave me the happiness of knowing you."

"It is certainly very sweet of you to speak so, Miss Drayton," replied Catherine, returning her smile.

"But, Miss Catherine," she persisted, "my best friends call me Agnes, and you must surely know I count you among my very best."

Catherine put her arms around Agnes' neck, and drawing her closely, kissed her affectionately. "Agnes, dear, I love you. You are quite right; formalities are out of place between us."

Fred had stood back during these little demonstrations, unwilling to interrupt them. But now he felt that he must make himself heard. "Miss Sidney, I assure you that, so far as I am concerned, that little encounter with Joe Gannon was a trivial affair, and I should be glad to repeat the experience, were it essential to the happy results it has brought us."

"Mr. Drayton, I can only say that you are the most unselfish, forgiving man I have ever known in my life."

"But I am not unselfish, Miss Sidney," he replied, "when I tell you that that is the most grateful compliment I have ever received in my life."

Mr. and Mrs. Sidney had withdrawn from the parlor when the subject of the Gannons was introduced into the conversation. Fred

now walked over to the open piano and said: "Miss Sidney, Agnes need not have told me you are a musician; the evidence of that is before us. Won't you let us enjoy some of your music?"

Catherine rose without hesitation and went to the piano. What she had just learned regarding Fred's disagreeable encounter, resulting from his kind effort to assist her, and then the generous manner in which both Fred and Agnes had treated the matter when the facts became known to her — all this had moved her deeply, and she felt that it would be a relief to express herself, as it were, through the instrument. A real lover of music is greatly influenced by his surroundings, and especially by his own mental condition, when he undertakes any musical performance. Though his execution be faultless, unless "the spirit moves him," the soul of music will not be there. Catherine, while by no means a creature of impulse, was subject to these influences, both subjective and objective, in a high degree. But to-night she was in the humor for playing, and when she struck the piano, every chord in her being responded to the notes of the instrument.

As she played for them Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," Fred and Agnes were in a state of ecstasy. Catherine realized intuitively that her hearers were in perfect sympathy with her in her music, and this was an added inspiration. Brother and sister glanced at each other several times with a look of amazement and admiration, and when she concluded both sprang to their feet with the exclamation: "Oh how exquisitely beautiful!" She smiled, and as they begged her to continue, she played, with a graceful touch, one of Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words."

"Miss Sidney," said Fred, as she rose from the piano, "your repertoire is as choice as your rendering of the themes is delightful. And I have never listened to a more beautiful interpretation of the great masters of music."

"It is very gratifying to hear you say so, Mr. Drayton, but I fear your kindness has prompted you to speak extravagantly. When I want, metaphorically speaking, to climb the mountains and survey the grandeur of all creation, I turn to Beethoven. If I feel like culling the fresh flowers of the valley and hearing the sweet melody that rings through

the woods, Mendelssohn inspires me. Is my picture extravagant?"

"Indeed it is not. I understand you perfectly, and sympathize with your thoughts. Does it not seem remarkable that there should be such a dearth of creative genius in the musical world at the present day, as compared with the days of the great masters of harmony and melody a century and more ago — Handel and Haydn, Bach and Beethoven, and then Chopin, Schubert, and Mendelssohn, Bellini and Verdi, and a score of others of a past generation?"

"Well, no, Mr. Drayton, I don't think we need marvel at that, when we reflect upon the fact that the immortal creations of literature and art — and especially of architecture and painting and poetry — have come down to us from past generations. Each age distinguishes itself in its own way — is, as you lawyers would say, *sui generis* — and each has bequeathed its best fruits to us. We are said to be the age of invention and practical application. Don't you think that future generations — in spite of our artistic shortcomings — will have much to be grateful for, to their forbears of the nineteenth century?

But see here, Miss Agnes, I am not going to let you sit down till you have redeemed yourself." And slipping her arm through Agnes', Catherine led her back to the piano.

Agnes at first felt a little hesitation. She was herself an accomplished pianist, but was diffident about playing after Catherine's performance. The influence of this, however, was upon her and acted as an incentive, and when she had played a few notes of one of Chopin's nocturnes, she regained entire confidence in herself, and the way was smooth and easy to her. As an encore, which was of course expected, she played, with much expression, Schubert's "Serenade," one of Fred's favorites, and received enthusiastic praise and congratulations from Catherine. If any further bond of close friendship was needed between these two young souls, music had supplied the link. For the rest of the evening they sat very near to one another.

"Now, Mr. Drayton," said Catherine, "it's your turn. Are you going to play or sing for us?"

"Come, Freddie," Agnes said, as she led him to the piano. He could not well refuse,

nor had he, in fact, any inclination to do so. With Agnes' accompaniment he sang the "Il Balen" from "Il Trovatore," with which at that time Brignoli was electrifying New York audiences at the Fourteenth Street Opera House. Fred had a good voice, and although he had not cultivated it as much as his mother and Agnes had urged him to, he acquitted himself with credit. Agnes insisted that he should give them one of his college songs, and she and Catherine laughed heartily over the funny words and jolly music of "Crambambuli," which he sang with great gusto, to his own accompaniment.

After a little further conversation and a promise, which Agnes exacted from Catherine, that she would call very soon, Fred and his sister bade "good-night" to their fair hostess. As the skies were clear, they returned home afoot — both in a happy frame of mind.

Fred found a note on the hall table from Dr. Eaton. It read as follows:

MY DEAR FRED,— Jim Gannon's condition to-night is critical. Father Griffin, of St. Stephen's, anointed him this evening, and is to bring him the Viaticum in the morning at eight o'clock. Would you care to be

present? I am going myself, and will stop at your door about a quarter before eight. Would be glad to have you join me, if you think you would care to go.

Sincerely,

ALFRED D. EATON

Fred sat a long time in his room that night, in a deep reverie, going over the events of the evening. "She certainly is a beautiful and most lovable woman," he said to himself, "and different from — so superior to — the extravagantly dressed, artificial women one ordinarily meets with at social gatherings. And her intellectual gifts and accomplishments are not a whit inferior to her personal attractions. So deeply interested, too, in works of charity. She is the first young lady I have ever known who went right down into the homes of the poor and brought comfort and consolation, as well as material help, to the afflicted. She is certainly unconventional."

When Catherine knelt that night to say her prayers, she was so distracted that she found great difficulty in keeping herself at all recollected during her devotions. And it was long after she had turned out her light that she fell into her first slumber. She was

aroused a few minutes later by her father, who knocked at the door to tell her that Dr. Eaton had sent word that Jim Gannon was to receive holy communion at eight o'clock in the morning and he hoped Catherine would be able to be there.

XVI

The Deathbed of a Christian

AT seven forty-five sharp the following morning Dr. Eaton ran up the steps of the Drayton residence and met Fred at the door. They hurried over to First Avenue and quietly went upstairs to the Gannon apartment. Sister Winifred was standing at the door to meet them. Catherine Sidney was seated near a little table, in the kitchen, on which stood two lighted wax candles. She rose as they entered and returned their bow with a simple "Good-morning." As they took their seats, Fred noticed that both of the ladies wore black veils and that there was no disposition to enter into any conversation, beyond the doctor's inquiry into Jim's condition and Sister Winifred's reply that he was about the same, resting quietly.

Within five minutes after they had come in,

a step was heard on the stairs and Sister Winifred and Catherine each took a lighted candle and knelt on either side of the open door. Both of the gentlemen likewise knelt. As Father Griffin entered and removed his hat, the two ladies rose and escorted him, with the lighted candles, to the rear room, the doctor and Fred walking immediately behind. As he entered the sick chamber, the priest said: "*Pax huic domui.*" [1] To which the others answered: "*Et omnibus habitantibus in ea.*" [2]

Fred took in at a glance his surroundings, and the picture left on his memory, as he afterwards told Agnes, was one that he could never forget. Everything about the room, including the bed, was immaculate. The dying man was propped up with pillows, his eyes closed and his hands crossed upon his breast. Mrs. Gannon, wearing a veil, knelt at the foot of the bed, with her face buried in her hands. A little table stood against the wall, near the head of the bed, covered with a spotless linen cloth, and on it were placed a crucifix, a small bowl containing holy water,

[1] Peace be to this house.
[2] And to all who dwell therein.

a tumbler half filled with water, and a large spoon. The ladies placed their candles on the little table, and then all fell on their knees.

Father Griffin, having first put on his surplice and stole, drew from his breast a silken burse, which was suspended by a cord from his neck; took from it, first the corporal, spreading that upon the table, and then the little silver pyx, containing the Blessed Sacrament, which he placed upon the corporal; and kneeling for a moment, adored in silence. Then taking a little spray of evergreen from the bowl, he sprinkled the sick man and the bed with holy water, reciting as he did so the *Asperges*, the first verse of the *Miserere*, the *Gloria Patri*, and the beautiful prayer, *Exaudi nos, Domine*. He whispered a few words to the sufferer, which were answered by a faint smile. As he turned again to the table, the doctor began the recitation of the *Confiteor*, which every educated Catholic knows by heart, and at the conclusion the priest pronounced the *Misereatur* and the *Indulgentiam*. Then taking the Blessed Sacrament from the pyx, and raising it, he said, as he faced the sick man: "*Ecce Agnus Dei*,

ecce qui tollit peccata mundi." [1] And thrice: "*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum; sed tantum dic verbo, et sanabitur anima mea.*" [2] Approaching the dying man he reverently placed the Sacred Host upon his tongue, saying: "*Accipe, frater, Viaticum corporis Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui te custodiat ab hoste maligno, et perducat in vitam aeternam. Amen.*" [3]

Taking a little water from the tumbler, in the spoon, he rinsed the tips of his fingers, which had held the Blessed Eucharist, and gave it to the sick man to swallow. After another short prayer, said aloud, they all knelt for a few minutes in silence. Fred remained on his knees with the others. Latin was familiar to him, and as Father Griffin spoke slowly and distinctly, he understood perfectly, and was deeply impressed by the beauty and solemnity of what he saw and heard.

[1] Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world.

[2] Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; but say only the word, and my soul shall be healed.

[3] Receive, brother, the Viaticum of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ; may He preserve thee from the wicked enemy, and bring thee into life everlasting. Amen.

When the others retired to the front room, the doctor, who had been watching Jim closely since he received holy communion, remained, and Sister Winifred continued on her knees at the bedside. In a few minutes he approached the bed, felt the pulse, and lifting one of the eyelids, examined the pupil of the eye. "Sister," he said, "call them back. Jim is dying." In a moment they were all again around the bed. "Father Griffin," said the doctor, "the end is near."

Then began that solemn and intensely pathetic scene which is witnessed around the deathbed of a Christian soul. All joined in the recitation of the Litany for the dying, kneeling with bowed heads; the mother nearest to him, watching the face of her son, with tears streaming down her cheeks. At the conclusion of the Litany, the priest read aloud, amid profound silence, the beautiful prayers for a departing soul: "Go forth, O Christian soul, from this world, in the name of God, etc. . . . May thy place be this day in peace, and thine abode in holy Sion. . . . O merciful God, look favorably upon this Thy servant — O most loving Father, have pity. . . . I commend thee to Almighty God,

dearly beloved brother, and commit thee to Him. May He absolve thee from all thy sins — mayest thou behold thy Redeemer face to face — among the Choirs of the Blessed mayest thou enjoy the sweetness of divine contemplation for evermore. . . . Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

"He has gone," said Dr. Eaton, who, kneeling with the others, had kept his finger on the expiring pulse and watched the last breathing of the dying man. Every head was bowed for several minutes in silent prayer, interrupted only by the sobs of the afflicted mother. And then Father Griffin said in a low voice: "Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace."

The doctor and Fred walked home in silence. As they parted on Madison Avenue the doctor turned and said: "Fred, when our time comes, yours and mine, God grant that we may be as well prepared to go as Jim Gannon."

Fred hurried to his room and addressed an envelope to Mrs. Gannon, in which he enclosed a hundred and fifty dollars, and a card saying merely: "For his funeral expenses,

from a friend of Jim Gannon." He gave it to Stephen, telling him to hurry over to First Avenue and hand it to Mrs. Gannon. Then going to Agnes' room, he gave her an account of all that had happened.

"Fred," she said, "I am sure I can be of some help to that poor, afflicted mother." And putting on her wraps, she hurried off on her errand of mercy.

XVII

A Histrionic Dinner

MRS. EWING had issued invitations for a dinner party early in the following week, and the Draytons and Eatons were among the invited guests.

Miss Catherine Sidney had been visiting governess in the Ewing family during the past two years, having as her pupils Miss Mildred, aged fourteen, and Master George, two years younger. Mrs. Ewing had become much attached to her, and the present dinner party was, in fact, planned as a little compliment to her.

Mr. Henry Ewing was a banker and a director in several financial institutions — a type of the best class of New York business men. Although a member of many clubs and societies, he seldom spent an evening away from home without his wife's accom-

panying him, and they were both fond of entertaining their friends.

Besides the Draytons and Eatons, they had with them this evening Mr. and Mrs. Trumbull and Mary, Lieutenant Hazelton, and Will Davidge. The latter was a young "society man," whose father—unfortunately for him—was wealthy. Being, moreover, an only son, his indulgent mother did not see why he should be compelled to earn his bread and butter by hard work. And even after he had failed to make good in the two or three situations his father had obtained for him, she found ready excuses, insisting that the fault was not her boy's; that his unreasonable employers had not understood him — that is, had failed to appreciate his good qualities. Naturally enough, therefore, since graduating from college, where he was a member of Fred Drayton's class, he had devoted himself chiefly to the demands of gay society. And Billy, as his chums called him, was bright and witty, played a good game of tennis, and sat well in the saddle. He was an ardent admirer of Agnes Drayton, but it was a case of unrequited love. She found him entertaining and laughed at his

jokes. And during the summer months, on mornings when her brother Louis overslept, and his pony, Meg, was led back to the stable disappointed, as she had told the lieutenant, she found it agreeable to have Will Davidge as her escort on their cross-country rides. Although she had several times ridiculed, or otherwise repelled his advances, he was persistent in his attentions, believing implicitly that "faint heart never won fair lady."

The other guests we have been introduced to. When they sat down to the table they were arranged as follows: Mrs. Ewing had on her right Mr. Trumbull, Miss Agnes Drayton, and Lieutenant Hazelton; on her left, Mr. Drayton, Mrs. Eaton, and Will Davidge. Mr. Ewing had on his right Mrs. Drayton, Dr. Eaton, and Miss Mary Trumbull; on his left, Mrs. Trumbull, Fred Drayton, and Miss Catherine Sidney.

The table talk was at first confined to near neighbors, or to those sitting vis-à-vis.

"Mrs. Trumbull," said Mr. Ewing, "our severe winter weather seems to agree wonderfully well with you. I am convinced that a mild climate is not essential to the preserva-

tion of health and youth." And he bowed gallantly to her.

"Ah, Mr. Ewing!" she replied, "your friends are quite persuaded of that fact." He acknowledged the compliment with a smile, and turning to his wife, said: "You see, my dear Marie, our friends appreciate your good care of me."

"But really, Mr. Ewing," continued Mrs. Trumbull, "we are not in the least tempted to forego the delightful society of our New York friends for the sake of enjoying a milder climate among strangers."

"And what would Mr. Trumbull find in Florida, or Bermuda, or Southern California to compensate for the loss of our metropolitan theatres?" suggested Mr. Drayton.

"Indeed, we should miss them, I know, very much," replied Mrs. Trumbull.

"The season has been a brilliant one, I think, from a dramatic point of view, has it not, Mr. Trumbull?" said Mrs. Ewing.

"Extraordinarily so," he replied.

"What have you found most attractive at the theatres this season?" she asked, knowing that it was a subject in which he was always interested and talked eloquently.

"Well, really, Mrs. Ewing, there have been so many attractions on the stage this winter that it would be difficult to single out the most noteworthy. With Booth and Barrett alternating in the parts of Othello and Iago, and Booth giving his superb interpretations of Hamlet and Richelieu, those who worship the classic drama must have been delighted. And if my memory serves me correctly, I think I saw you and Mr. Ewing at one or two of those performances."

"You are quite right, Mr. Trumbull. Mr. Ewing and I have seen Booth twice this winter."

"And then," continued Mr. Trumbull, "nothing could be more enjoyable than an evening at Wallack's, where we have had 'Ours,' 'Rosedale,' and 'Money,' with the inimitable Lester Wallack and Harry Beckett and John Gilbert; Fisher, Ringgold, Polk; Miss Jeffreys Lewis, Miss Effie Germon, Miss Ada Dyas, Mrs. John Gilbert, and Madam Ponisi."

Everyone was now listening to Mr. Trumbull, smiling at his enthusiasm.

"The company at that house is always good, and no place of amusement in New York attracts a better audience."

"Which of the three plays do you like best?" asked Mrs. Drayton.

"Oh 'Rosedale,' I think. Wallack, you know, wrote it himself — though 'Ours' is fascinating. Wallack was educated for the English army, and naturally enough had a strong liking for the military character on the stage. That scene in camp, in the Crimea, when Lord Raglan and his aide, making their way through a blinding storm, enter the colonel's (Wallack's) quarters, covered with snow, which beats into the room as the door is opened, is grand. Mary and her cousin insisted on our taking a proscenium box the second evening that we saw the play, so they could discover how the snow was made and what produced the wind that came whistling through the open door."

There was a laugh all around the table and Agnes giggled as she exclaimed: "Oh, Mary, are you and Lieutenant Hazelton so full of curiosity?"

"Well, I assure you, we were fully repaid for our curiosity," said the lieutenant. "We saw just how the trick was done; didn't we, Mary?"

"Indeed we did," she replied, "and it was great fun."

"And Mr. Trumbull," said Dr. Eaton, "what do you think of 'Led Astray' at the Union Square?"

"Oh that play has already had a phenomenal run," replied Mr. Trumbull, "with Clara Morris, Rose Eytinge, Fanny Morant, Kate Claxton, Charley Thorne, and Stuart Robson. A bit sensational, but that feature apparently makes it all the more popular. I think, by the way, doctor, I saw you and Mrs. Eaton, a few evenings ago, applauding John Brougham and Fanny Davenport in 'Our Boys' at the Fifth Avenue."

"We were there, Mr. Trumbull. We really don't get out very often, but go more frequently to the Fifth Avenue than to any other theatre. It's within walking distance of our house, and though very small, one of the most comfortable and recherché places of amusement, I think, in the city. And then I take a special interest in John Brougham, whom I know personally. The poor fellow has had a somewhat checkered career. He's a Dublin man; was educated as a surgeon, but owing to financial reverses in his family, took to the stage and to writing plays. His first venture here in New York was at Burton's, I believe;

but he has been connected at different times with all or most of our leading playhouses, and has been manager of three of them — Niblo's Garden, the Old Bowery, and Brougham's Lyceum, which he opened in 1850. He was one of the founders of the Lotus Club, recently organized, and for some time its president. As a playwright and theatrical manager he has not, perhaps, been an eminent success. But he is certainly one of the most popular comedians we have ever had. And Fanny Davenport, the daughter of the genial E. L. Davenport, is a fascinating actress. Don't you think so, Miss Mary?" he asked, turning to Miss Mary Trumbull, who sat on his right.

"Indeed I do," she replied. "I love Fanny Davenport and always enjoy an evening at the Fifth Avenue. Last week father took us to see the 'School for Scandal' at Daly's and John McCullough in 'Venice Preserved.' You see, we mix comedy with tragedy, so as not to become, as father says, either too frivolous by the one, or too serious by the other."

"Your father is a good authority in such matters," said Mr. Drayton, "and I quite agree with him. Witnessing either helps us

to appreciate and enjoy the other. We all of us spent a pleasant evening, not long ago, seeing Florence in 'The Mighty Dollar.'"

"That's well worth seeing, too," remarked Mr. Ewing, "though I think I prefer Florence as Bob Brierley in 'The Ticket of Leave Man.'"

"No one seems to have a good word for 'Humpty Dumpty,'" said Will Davidge. "I think it's the finest bit of rattling nonsense in New York to-day. Fox is a popular favorite and has made a tremendous hit. Don't you think so, Fred?"

"He is certainly very funny," replied Fred. "But if anyone wants to enjoy a good laugh, I can't conceive of anything more delightfully comical than Ed Sothern as Lord Dundreary, or John Raymond as Colonel Sellers. Agnes, I know, won't quite agree with me, because she thinks the high-water mark in comedy has been reached by 'Solon Shingle.'"

"Funny!" exclaimed Agnes. "Why, it's the funniest thing I ever saw in my life. Don't you think so, Mary?"

"I know I laughed at John Owens and his 'bar'l of apple sass' until I almost cried," replied Mary. "I believe Lieutenant Hazelton

was in mortal fear that night lest some of his men from Governor's Island might be there and conclude that we had all gone crazy."

"I think, Mary," said the lieutenant, "my dread of being seen was rather when I found myself, unexpectedly, sitting in the snow on the pavement, in front of Miss Drayton's carriage."

This honest confession by the young officer brought forth such a peal of laughter from Agnes that her mother gave her a look which unmistakably suggested moderation in the expression of her feelings. But as the lieutenant joined heartily with her in the laugh, and all the others were similarly affected, Mrs. Drayton could not help smiling herself.

"I confess," said Mr. Trumbull, looking around to see if anyone was disposed to criticise his good taste, "I confess that I enjoy an evening at the San Francisco Minstrels, with Birch, Wambold and Backus, or listening to Dan Bryant and his knights of the cork; though I was provoked at Bryant when he abandoned legitimate drama and took to minstrelsy."

"It's the best sort of relaxation," said Mr. Drayton, "for a man who has been worried

all day and wants to forget himself and his down-town troubles."

"I haven't heard anyone describing the beauties of the 'Black Crook,'" said Will Davidge.

"O Mr. Davidge!" exclaimed Mary Trumbull, who sat opposite him. "You wouldn't have any of us visit Niblo's while that terrible thing is on exhibition, would you?"

"What do you know about it, Will?" asked Fred. "Only what you've read in the papers, I suppose."

"I'm not telling any tales out of school," replied Davidge.

Mrs. Eaton, who didn't quite like the direction in which the conversation was drifting, turned to Miss Catherine, who sat opposite, at the further end of the table, and asked what she had enjoyed most, of the season's entertainments.

"Why, Mrs. Eaton," she replied, "I haven't been to the theatre this winter; unless I count an amateur performance which was given at the school for the benefit of one of Dr. McGlynn's charities. I think you and Dr. Eaton were among the patrons on that

occasion. But Mrs. Ewing has given me two delightful evenings at the opera."

"What did you hear, Miss Sidney?"

"The first night we heard Miss Christine Nilsson, with Miss Annie Louise Cary and Brignoli, in 'Trovatore,' and the second night we heard them in 'Lucia di Lammermoor.' I think I never more thoroughly enjoyed anything in my life."

"And have you heard Miss Clara Louise Kellogg?"

"Yes, last season Mrs. Ewing was so kind as to take me to hear Miss Kellogg as Marguerite in 'Faust.' She is a mistress of her art, certainly, but I think I enjoy Nilsson more. I am told that we are to have Miss Pauline Lucca here next year, and I am sure she will captivate all hearts when she makes her appearance."

"You have heard her, then, Miss Sidney."

"Yes, Mrs. Eaton, I heard her three years ago in London, where, as you know, she is a great favorite. She took the part of Elvira in 'Ernani' on one occasion, and that of Zerlina in 'Fra Diavolo' the second time I saw her."

"We heard her two years ago, in Paris," said Mrs. Trumbull.

"Yes, we saw her there in two or three operas," said Mr. Trumbull; "'Rigoletto,' I think, 'Traviata,' and 'Norma.' She is excellent in whatever part she sings. But the best Norma I have ever listened to is Parepa-Rosa."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Trumbull," said Mrs. Ewing. "She is superb; and from all I hear of her she is, apart from all her artistic accomplishments, one of the most estimable women on the stage."

"One of the most delightful evenings we have enjoyed this winter at the opera," said Mrs. Drayton, "was when we heard 'Lohengrin' — sung, of course, in Italian — with Campanini as Lohengrin, Christine Nilsson as Elsa, Annie Louise Cary as Ortrud, and Del Puente as Telramund. We all agreed that, with the exception of Brignoli, Campanini is the finest tenor we have had in New York." [1]

[1] A slight anachronism may be detected here; but it is only slight. Most of the above-mentioned dramatic and musical attractions were seen in New York during the same winter — all of them within two or three seasons — in the early seventies.

"He certainly is," said Mr. Trumbull. "I have heard him several times and enjoyed him greatly. You refer, Mrs. Drayton, to 'Lohengrin,' beautifully rendered, as it was, in Italian, by singers none of whom are German. Whether or not Wagnerian music is ever likely to displace that of the Italian school in popular favor, I have no doubt that within a few years we shall have Wagner's wonderful works — not only 'Lohengrin,' 'Tannhäuser,' 'Die Meistersinger,' and 'Tristan,' but 'The Ring of the Nibelung,' that music-drama which is now attracting so much attention and drawing so many of the musical world to Bayreuth. We shall have all these produced here in New York by German artists, and I am sure they will be cordially welcomed by the lovers of real music. But be that as it may," continued Mr. Trumbull, "next year we are to be introduced to opera bouffe; and that will certainly add to the gayety, if not to the moral dignity, of social life."

"That's something I'm dying to hear — French opera," said Will Davidge.

"Well, you will have a chance next fall," replied Mr. Trumbull, "to hear them all — 'La Grande-Duchesse,' 'La Belle Hélène,'

'La Fille de Madame Angot,' 'Fleur de Thé,' 'Giroflé-Girofla,' *et id genus omne.*"

"Mrs. Eaton," said Catherine, "you and I can recall nothing, I am sure, more gratifying in the way of music than the beautiful 'Stabat Mater' of Rossini we listened to a few weeks ago at St. Stephen's Church, with Berger at the organ. It was another of Dr. McGlynn's benefits."

"I enjoyed it intensely," replied Mrs. Eaton, "and the impression it made lasted with me many a day."

"That 'Cujus Animam' made my blood run cold," said the doctor; "and the exquisitely rendered duet that followed — the 'Quis est homo qui non fleret' — almost brought me to my knees."

"Indeed, to be truly appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed," suggested Catherine, "that exquisite composition should be heard in church, with organ accompaniment. And when you have, added thereto, as we did that night, the violin, the cello, and the sweet music of the harp, the effect, it seems to me, is something which far surpasses any enjoyment to be found in the glare of the footlights and the éclat of grand opera."

Fred, who sat next to Catherine, whispered something in her ear, which caused her to smile, and brought a slight tinge to her cheeks. It did not escape Agnes' attention. The conversation was taken up again by those sitting nearest to each other, and turned upon various subjects.

"Mr. Ewing," said his amiable wife, "I know you gentlemen all want your smoke before joining the ladies in the parlor." She led the way to the drawing-room, and the gentlemen followed Mr. Ewing into the library.

XVIII

A Bit of Controversy

MR. EWING'S library was one of the most attractive rooms in the house, and more frequently occupied as a sitting-room by the family than any other. Two sides were taken up by well-stored bookcases, and between the window and one of the cases stood a large mahogany writing desk. There were several excellent oil paintings on the walls, including "A Marine Scene on the Coast of Normandy," by Daubigny; "The Harvesters," by Millet; "Sunrise in the White Mountains" and "The Hudson River from West Point," by Kensett; "The Wandering Minstrel," by Bougereau; and portraits, by Huntington, of Mr. Ewing's father and mother; besides some very pretty etchings and engravings. A marble statue, "The Angler," by Powers, stood in one corner of the room and attracted much admiration; and the bric-a-brac distrib-

uted here and there about the room were evidence of Mrs. Ewing's good taste. When the gentlemen entered this evening, the oblong table in the centre of the room was covered with beautiful silver tankards, cut glass decanters, pitchers, tumblers, etc., with brandy and liqueurs and cigars. The chairs around the table were of that substantial, comfortable sort that add greatly to the enjoyment of an after-dinner cigar — so indispensable, some of us think, to good digestion. Moreover — best of all — Mr. Ewing possessed the happy faculty of making everybody feel perfectly at home.

Good humor prevailed as the gentlemen lit their cigars, glanced through the bookcases, admired the pictures on the walls, and seated themselves around the table. The talk ranged over all sorts of subjects, from the Franco-Prussian War to the latest afternoon quotations in the stock market.

Presently a conversation sprang up regarding what Mr. Ewing spoke of as the "lamentable retrogression" which seems to be taking place in the moral and social conditions of the country. He referred to the increasing prevalence of crime, and argued

that there had been a lowering of the standard of morals, in both public and private life. In the discussion which followed, a difference of opinion was expressed as to the extent of these conditions, as to the causes which had brought them about, and especially as to any effective remedies which could be applied to relieve them. Mr. Ewing himself ventured the opinion that the lack of an educated public spirit was largely responsible for existing evils. Mr. Trumbull was inclined to think that both in the making and the execution of the laws there was a lack of intelligent comprehension of the needs of the community and too little conscientious effort to correct existing abuses. He believed, moreover, that misdemeanors which are productive of harm to the community should be included in the same category with crimes; that the former are premeditated, with a full consciousness of the possible evils that may result, while the latter are often committed under the impulse of an uncontrollable passion, and regretted almost before the act is completed. Our penal code metes out to the former nothing more severe than a fine, while the convict of crime is condemned to prison life,

if not to the gallows. If this is not too severe, at least the former is not sufficiently drastic.

Will Davidge, with the intolerance of youth, declared positively that laws should be passed that would stamp out all crime, and that a police force should be maintained with sufficient power to make the criminal classes tremble. His emphatic declaration provoked merely a good-natured smile. Fred suggested that political corruption had become so widespread that an honest enforcement of the laws was practically impossible. Mr. Drayton thought that, while punitive laws were indispensable and the police should be clothed with authority and power to deal with existing crime, the best and surest safeguard of society was the education of the rising generation; that our public schools should receive a more generous support.

"Dr. Eaton, what would you suggest as the best remedy for the prevailing evils of the present day?" asked Mr. Ewing.

"I think you are aware," replied the doctor, "that I hold some rather positive views upon this whole subject — views in which I could not expect you gentlemen to agree with me."

"Nevertheless, doctor, I am sure it will give us all pleasure to listen to you," said Mr. Ewing.

"I cannot see," continued the doctor, "how the radical ills of society, of which you speak, can be corrected either by legislation or by purely secular education."

"Would you, then, make our criminal code less severe?" inquired Mr. Trumbull.

"Or do away with our common-school system?" asked Mr. Drayton.

"Neither, gentlemen," replied the doctor, "neither, I assure you, although I do believe that the nation is best governed that is least governed — other things being equal. Legislation is not always prompted by patriotism or philanthropy, and even when it is, often defeats its own good purpose. Sumptuary laws, for instance, but too often enhance the evils they were intended to cure; paternalism as surely breeds discontent and selfish greed. The efficiency of a law depends largely upon the mental and moral dispositions of the people whom it affects. The Constitution of the United States would be poorly adapted to the requirements of the inhabitants of Dahomey or Timbuctoo; nor would our common

law be interpreted in the Fiji Islands in the same spirit that it is here in New York. Legislation itself does not inculcate good morals, any more than good manners. Human laws may, and of course do, in a measure, protect society from the physical ills that its own criminal classes would inflict upon it: they may stay the hand that is raised to strike, and punish the wrong-doer; they may and do provide, with laudable philanthropy, hospitals and asylums for afflicted humanity. But the springs of human action, for right or wrong, have their sources elsewhere. Virtue, which is the truest safeguard of society, is not an offspring of human laws. Nor do I believe that the evils which are corrupting and corroding society can be corrected by a more universal diffusion of knowledge, through that secular education which is imparted in our common schools. The theory is not supported by the most reliable statistics obtainable on this subject. To furnish a man with an intellectual, without a moral education, is like placing in his hands sharp-edged tools without teaching him how to use them. He will turn them to his own destruction, as well as that of others."

"Dr. Eaton," said Mr. Ewing, "I am impressed by what you say, and I am inclined to agree with you. But I don't quite see how you would solve the problem that you have proposed."

"If the laws of the country," added Mr. Drayton, "and the work of our public schools are inadequate to protect the community and promote the best interests of modern civilization, what shall we do to better our condition?"

"That the government of a country should, by wise legislation, provide for the safety and welfare of its citizens, and to that end should inflict punishment upon violators of the law, admits of no argument," replied the doctor; "nor does any intelligent man question the advantages of a good education. But neither human laws nor human science can, unaided, eradicate the evils which crept into the world with original sin. Unless these are met and overcome by stronger weapons than finite legislation and worldly wisdom, they will inevitably destroy us."

"And where will you find those weapons?" asked Mr. Trumbull.

"In Christianity," he replied. "To explain

myself more clearly: I believe that the child should always be taught to distinguish between good and evil, between right and wrong; to honor and love his Creator, to respect authority, to realize his duties both to God and to his fellow-being. This, in the first instance, is the exclusive province of the parent. But there comes a time, and quickly too, when the instruction of the child is, in the main, intrusted to another. Shall the wholesome, moral lessons of childhood be discontinued in the school and the undeveloped, impressionable boy or girl, of eight or ten years, be satiated with profane knowledge only? Such is the system now in vogue. Can there be any doubt as to the result of such a system?"

"But, doctor," said Mr. Trumbull, "our young people go to Sunday school, and both old and young are instructed in religion by the sermons which are preached every Sunday in our churches."

"How much religion, Mr. Trumbull, how much knowledge of things spiritual and eternal do you imagine is imbibed by these children during the hour spent at a sectarian Sunday school, assuming that all the young people of

the denomination attend — which we know they do not? As to the preaching, if we may judge from the newspaper reports, there is very little practical Christian doctrine uttered in them. And what proportion, think you, of non-Catholic men in the city of New York are in the habit of going to church and listening to a sermon on Sunday?"

"I must say, I quite agree with the doctor in that," remarked Mr. Ewing. "I am not a very regular church-goer myself, but occasionally I do go; and I have been surprised at the character of the sermons I have listened to. A few evenings ago Mrs. Ewing and I heard a lecture by Bishop Coxe, of Western New York, in the Church of the Heavenly Rest, on 'Church Reform in Italy.' I went home with the impression that the reverend gentleman would do better to devote his missionary zeal to the matter of church reform in New York. On another occasion we went to hear the Rev. Mr. Frothingham in Lyric Hall. His theme was 'The Anti-christs of To-day.' Of course his particular anti-christ was the Pope. If there was a Catholic present, his blood must have boiled at the offensive language used by this Christian

minister in speaking of the faith of several millions of our fellow-citizens. My wife and I have occasionally gone around to Calvary Baptist Church to hear Dr. MacArthur. He is rather an interesting speaker, but he is never so much in earnest as when he is pronouncing one of his philippics against the Church of Rome. I would never think of taking anyone there who was seeking to be instructed in the principles of the Christian religion. And the diluted, namby-pamby politics one hears from some of our popular pulpits is enough to nauseate even Sunday Christians."

"You are hitting them pretty hard, Mr. Ewing," said Will Davidge.

"I am telling the truth," insisted Mr. Ewing.

"We Catholics," said the doctor, "go to church primarily to say our prayers and to receive the sacraments. When we listen to a sermon, it is the lessons of the gospel that are inculcated, as you must all know, if you have ever attended our Catholic services. Eloquence is not essential, although there are, as a matter of fact, a number of eloquent preachers in our churches. But the exhorta-

tions are earnest, calculated to impress upon their hearers the importance of saving their immortal souls by avoiding sin and practising the Christian virtues. The influence of the Catholic clergy in combating vice and sin of every kind and promoting virtue is exerted especially in the confessional. You who are not familiar with the facts can form no adequate idea of the beneficent results flowing from the sacrament of penance in the Catholic Church. Nor can you easily understand the laborious, exhausting task which a priest undergoes who sits for five or six hours in the confessional and hears the confessions of all sorts of people, answers their questions, and advises them according to their needs. I venture to say there is nothing in Christiandom that accomplishes so much for the safety and welfare of society as this divine institution of sacramental penance. It is well enough also to remember that these faithful shepherds, who toil incessantly for the welfare of their flocks, are working for the love of God. The 'regulars,' that is, members of religious orders, receive no compensation whatever for their services; secular priests are allowed a salary of from five to eight hundred dollars a year.

After their books have been paid for and their charities distributed, there is little left, as you can imagine, for clothing and personal comfort.

"Some little idea may be formed of the work being done in our midst by the Catholic Church, for the moral and intellectual well-being of our people and the promotion of good citizenship, when I mention the fact that there are in this city five hundred and forty Catholic churches and chapels and one hundred and eighty-five parochial schools, with one hundred and forty thousand pupils. And this does not include the thousands who are being educated in our Catholic colleges, convents, and private schools."[1]

"Doctor, your people have reason to be proud of the work which they have accomplished," said Mr. Trumbull. "Although I don't agree with them in their faith, I have always felt that Catholics were thoroughly in earnest in their religious work."

"But, gentlemen," continued Dr. Eaton, "there are other influences besides that of the churches upon which we ought to be able

[1] Dr. Eaton is here permitted to quote the figures for Greater New York, given in the Church statistics of 1911.

to depend for assistance in the work of improving our social condition, but which are too often used to propagate error and to corrupt rather than elevate the morals of the people. I refer to the popular literature of the day. We all recognize the power of the press. Its influence on the thought and the manners of the people is immense. The possibilities for good, and equally for harm, in this field are incalculable. For many who rarely ever go inside of a church, and seldom visit a lecture hall, the newspaper is their intellectual and moral teacher. Some few of these are doing earnest, conscientious work. But in our larger cities, it must be admitted, the daily papers which have the widest circulation are little more than a daily chronicle of crime and scandal, and misfortunes of all sort. The pen of the writer and the pencil of the artist are employed in a strenuous and ceaseless effort to provide material which shall attract the eye by its half-concealed suggestion of obscenity and influence the imagination by its disgusting details of folly and crime and human misery. I believe the pernicious influence of these journals upon the minds and hearts of the

youth of the country is appalling. And that of the coarse, vile, unspeakable fiction which is scattered broadcast over the land, and read by millions of our young people, is, if anything, worse. If it were in my power to do so, I would establish a moral censorship of the press in this country. If we are to be held accountable for the scandal we give to the little ones, I believe there is an awful day of reckoning coming for those conscienceless editors and authors. They have not heeded the warning, 'Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh.'

"But, gentlemen, I owe you an apology, and certainly beg your pardon. I know I have been taxing your patience, imposing upon you my personal views, in some of which, at least, I ought not to expect you to concur. But the subject is one in which I am intensely interested; and when I began my remarks, it was merely with the intention of replying to the inquiries you put to me as to what I would suggest as a remedy for the ills of our body politic, over and above what may be effected by legislation and by our common schools."

"Dr. Eaton," said Mr. Trumbull, "for my-

self, I thank you heartily for your remarks. I agree with you perfectly in your views regarding the pernicious influence of our modern popular literature, especially that of the infamous sensational journals that are corrupting the morals and vitiating the taste of all classes. But it seems to me you do injustice to those who do not agree with you in matters of faith. I am sure you will not deny that there are thousands of Christians who do not unite with you in your worship, yet who are doing magnificent work in their tireless efforts to raise the fallen and to relieve the suffering and distress of their fellow-creatures. Our churches, it is true, are not as well attended as yours, but in the congregations there are many devout, earnest souls, who are consecrating their lives to the most unselfish work for Christian charity."

"Mr. Trumbull," replied the doctor, "no one is more ready than I am to admit the truth of what you say. No one appreciates more fully than I do the beautiful characters, men and women, among those to whom you refer. I was born and, up to three years ago, my life was spent in their midst, so that I know them well. Many of them, as you

say, afford edifying examples of Christian charity. But — and here again I must ask your indulgence for speaking frankly, for again I know you will not agree with my views — three hundred odd years ago their ancestors forsook their father's house, and they have since wandered, these poor souls, like stray sheep, without a shepherd. Many of them still cling to some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, as that of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption, Original Sin and Regeneration by Baptism. But their faith is vacillating and uncertain — they have no infallible guide.

"I ask you, each of you, is it possible for any body of men, banded together for any purpose, political, social, or financial, to accomplish any great results, or even to preserve their organized existence, without a head? We are an independent nation of freemen, jealous of our rights. How long should we maintain our liberties, or even our autonomy, if we did not loyally recognize a governing authority, or if we permitted different communities to interpret the laws of the country as seemed best to them? The Constitution of the United States is as clear

and simple and perfect a political document as ever was penned by wise and good men. It has required a hundred years, the intelligent study of our best jurists, and many volumes of legal decisions to interpret its real meaning and application on many disputed points. Nor is the task yet completed.

"What would have been the result among a law-abiding people had we not the Supreme Court of the United States to solve questions as they arise and define infallibly, so far as we are concerned, the law of the land? The several branches of the Supreme Court of this State have differed repeatedly in their interpretation of the laws of New York. An appeal is taken to the supreme tribunal at Albany, and when the Court of Appeals has rendered a decision, it is and must be accepted as final and binding upon every citizen of this State. Nor need I remind you, gentlemen, that every well-ordered business or financial institution must, as an essential condition of its efficiency and permanency, have a board of direction and an executive head. Is it reasonable to suppose that an institution so far raised above and beyond all these, as things spiritual and eternal transcend

things material and temporal, can accomplish the work intrusted to it by the Founder of Christianity, that of teaching the truth to all nations and peoples, and saving immortal souls, without a head, without unity and catholicity?"

"But, doctor," Mr. Trumbull rejoined, "our several denominations have their boards and committees to which matters of church discipline are referred, and many of them have their conventions, in which questions of faith and morals are freely discussed and determined. And you know we all accept the Bible as the only rule of faith, conceding the right of private interpretation."

"But where, sir, do these boards and committees or these national conventions derive their authority to teach? Was it to them that the words of Christ were addressed: 'Going, teach ye all nations,' and 'He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me'; 'Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world'? If one church teaches one thing and another something different, whither shall we turn? Is eternal truth so divisible, or so mutable, that what is true at one period,

or in one country, is at another time, or in another part of the world false? What possible meaning can be put on the words of St. Paul: 'Keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, *one body and one spirit* . . . one Lord, *one faith*, one baptism. . . . We be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine'? How, I say, shall we understand this language, except as an admonition that Christians should have but one faith — the faith of the one indivisible Church?

"You say you allow private or personal interpretation in a subject matter which transcends all other subjects that men can study or think about. Really, does that not strike you as being very extraordinary — that the eternal truths of divine revelation should be contained exclusively in a book which but a small proportion of the human race, since the establishment of Christianity, have been able to read — much less to understand — and that the interpretation of the real meaning and force of those sublime truths should be left to any and every human being, learned or ignorant, with the indisputable right of receiving or rejecting, of magnifying

or minimizing, as may seem best to him or may satisfy his personal predilections? Would you tolerate for a moment such a proposition in the case of any code of human laws?"

He paused for a moment to study the faces of his hearers. No one seemed inclined to answer his question, but all of them appeared to be deeply interested. He therefore continued: "And what has been the result of this abrogation of a supreme, infallible authority in matters spiritual, and giving to each individual the right to formulate his own creed? From the very inception of the great rebellion against the divinely instituted Church, her wayward children, blinded by pride and prejudice, have quarrelled among themselves, divided into hostile camps, made and remade, published and revised their religious creeds, according to the dictation of their temporal rulers or the plausible arguments of their self-appointed leaders; while new interpretations have been put upon the teachings of Christ and new forms of belief have sprung up on every side.

"It is inconceivable that the Divine Founder of Christianity, infinitely wise and infinitely

powerful as He is, should have built His Church upon the sand, to be swept away by the storms of error and infidelity, and then to be reformed and rebuilt by human hands; only to be again disrupted by the same human agents and made a patchwork of heterogeneous creeds. A Church founded by Infinite Wisdom must, *ipso facto*, be infallible and indefectible, whatever the limitations or infirmities of its individual ministers. It is a contradiction in terms to assume that a divinely established Church can be reformed by finite beings."

The door opened and Mrs. Ewing looked in inquiringly. "Gentlemen," she said, "are we to have the pleasure of your society again this evening? I suppose you are discussing grave business problems, and I am really very sorry to interrupt your conversation, but we should be very glad to see you all in the parlor."

"Yes, Marie," replied Mr. Ewing, "we have been discussing business, and Dr. Eaton has been demonstrating to us that we are all on the road to moral bankruptcy."

"Oh has he, indeed?" said Mrs. Ewing, entering the room. "Then I think I can

divine the remedy he has proposed. You are all to become dutiful children of the Holy Father. Have I guessed right, doctor?"

"Mrs. Ewing, as usual, you are entirely right," he replied, and offering her his arm, they led the way to the parlor.

XIX

"Casta Diva"

AS the gentlemen entered the parlor, they were met by a merry peal of laughter from the ladies, who were seated together near a table at one end of the room, listening to Agnes, who was telling Mary Trumbull's fortune in the palm of her hand. She had just said that Mary was evidently very hard to please; that she would have many admirers, to all of whom she promised to be indifferent. "But, but — what is this?" she exclaimed, studying her hand very seriously and appearing perplexed. "Several short journeys — a long one — and then — yes, my dear — and then you will fall madly, desperately in love!"

"A good guess," said Fred, as he walked up behind and laid his hand on Agnes' shoulder.

"There's no guess about it," she replied. "It's the positive revelation of a fine art."

"Chirognomy or chiromancy?" asked the doctor.

"In this case both," she replied. "The clear evidence of the first interprets the suggestions of the second."

"Good, Miss Agnes!" exclaimed the doctor. "I see you are an expert palmister. I used to know a little about that interesting study myself. Let me see, you read by mounts and lines, do you not?" holding up and examining his right hand. "Now where is Saturn?"

"Oh doctor!" cried Agnes. "You are forgetting first principles; the left hand always."

"Why, of course," he replied; "I remember that."

"Here is Saturn," she said, holding up the palm of Mary's hand, "at the base of the middle finger. It indicates the quality of wisdom and prudence. Here to the left, under the first finger, is the mount of Jupiter, suggesting love of esteem and honor, and, some palmisters assert, a happy disposition. To the right Apollo — love of the beautiful, of course, and suggesting noble aspirations. At the base of the little finger Mercury appears, with modern proclivities — strenu-

osity and intensity in all the commonplace affairs of life. Directly under this we find Mars, indicative of resolution and courage; and still lower, at the wrist, the mount of the Moon discloses a fondness for revery and extravagant sentiment. At the thumb, as everyone knows, rises the mount of Venus, which I hardly need tell you is the index of a loving temperament, as well as a taste for the beautiful things of life."

"And the three great lines?" asked the doctor; "or are there four?"

"Four," replied Agnes. "The line of life, which follows the contour of the mount of Venus, indicates the length of our sojourn on earth. Above this, and running almost horizontally across the palm, are the two great lines of the head and the heart. The first, or lower one, reveals the intellectual endowments; the upper one the real character of the subject. In following these lines we have to proceed cautiously; that is," said Agnes, with a sly glance at the doctor, "we sometimes allow ourselves a certain amount of fibbing in describing just what we discover there, for the sake of all concerned."

"Oh you little wretch," exclaimed Mary,

"you've been making a goose of me! I knew you were all the time."

"No, indeed, Mary, I have not. This time I have been telling the absolute truth, I assure you."

"Agnes has diagnosed your case quite correctly, I am sure," said the doctor.

At this point Mr. Trumbull rose, and crossing over to where Catherine sat, bowed politely to her and said: "Miss Sidney, won't you give us the pleasure of hearing you sing?"

"Why certainly, Mr. Trumbull," she replied, and accepting his arm, went to the piano. "What shall it be?" she asked.

"Your own selection, I am sure, Miss Catherine, will be better than any I can make. You have here, I see, the score of 'Norma'; it is full of gems."

"Yes, it is indeed; I am very fond of it," she replied, turning the pages of the book he had placed before her.

She selected the "Casta Diva." Catherine possessed a rich mezzo-soprano voice, and she sang now with a pathos and sweetness of expression that captivated all her

hearers. The unbroken silence which prevailed while she sang, as well as the exclamations of delight which followed, were evidence of the pleasure she had given them. Fred reached the piano almost before she had concluded the last prolonged note; and as compliments were being showered upon her from all sides, he bent over and said something in a low voice which evidently pleased, for she turned to him with a bright smile of recognition on her face.

"Miss Catherine," called out Dr. Eaton, apparently afraid that some one would forestall him, "I am very fond of the sweet Irish melodies that we used to sing a great deal when I was in college. I am sure you must know some of them."

"Yes, indeed, doctor, I do, and I love them. Mr. Drayton, will you kindly hand me the book you will see there in the cabinet, called 'Songs of Ireland'?" Opening the book which Fred handed her, she turned to the doctor and said: "Tom Moore's 'Believe me if Ever'; how is that?"

"Lovely!" exclaimed the doctor, "set to the sweet music of 'My Lodging's on the Cold Ground.'"

Again every sound in the room was hushed as Catherine sang:

Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul may be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear.
No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look which she turned when he rose.

"That's delicious, Miss Catherine!" exclaimed Agnes, walking over to the piano. "Nothing could be sweeter." And she was evidently about to propose some favorite of hers when Mr. Ewing called out: "Miss Catherine, I heard you and the children singing a jolly little song the other day, 'Doo-dah.' I think we might all of us appreciate it."

"Why, that would be grand," she replied, with affected enthusiasm. "I will be very glad to sing it, but on one condition — that you all join in the chorus."

"Agreed," said Dr. Eaton. "I know the old song well — 'Camptown Races' — and I will guarantee that Fred and Will Davidge have often sung it during college days. I'll lead the chorus." And springing to his feet he went to the piano, picked up the sheet of music that Catherine had opened before her, turned to the company, and said in a commanding voice: "Attention, chorus!" and he read the words they were to sing when he gave the signal. Catherine had asked Fred to sing the solo, and he had consented. So as soon as the doctor replaced the music before her, saying, "All ready!" she played the air through once, and Fred began:

Solo. Camptown ladies, sing the song —
Chorus. Doo-dah! doo-dah! —
So. Camptown races, five miles long —
Ch. Doo-dah! doo-dah-day! —
So. I came down there with my hat caved in —
Ch. Doo-dah! doo-dah! —
So. Went back home with a pocket full of tin —
Ch. Doo-dah! doo-dah-day!

Here the doctor raised his arms and swung them through the air, after the manner of an orchestra leader, whispering aloud, "Allegro, con spirito"

CHORUS

I'm bound to run all night!
I'm bound to run all day!
I'll bet my money on the bob-tail nag —
Somebody bet on the bay.

Great applause, as well as a hearty laugh, greeted this classic effusion. And all four verses were sung with animation and éclat.

As Catherine rose, laughing, from the piano, Fred offered her his arm; they walked out into the hall and strolled up and down together for some minutes, and then, at Fred's suggestion, wandered into the palm room. This was situated in the rear of the library and on the opposite side of the hall from the dining-room. In the centre of the apartment there was a fountain, in which stood the bronze figure of a cherub struggling with a dolphin, which he holds clasped in his arms, and from the mouth of which a jet of water spouts up and falls in a spray into the large round basin below. Lounges and com-

fortable chairs were ranged, under the palms, about the room.

"Mr. Drayton," said Catherine, as they sat down, "I have a little news which I hope will interest you."

"Anything, Miss Catherine, which interests you cannot fail to be of interest to me," replied Fred. A simple remark certainly, but — was it the language, or the manner and tone in which the words were spoken? — somehow it was a revelation to her. She was not at all displeased, however, though possibly a bit disconcerted for the moment. She continued, without raising her eyes: "Father and mother sail next week for Liverpool."

It was Fred's turn now to be thoroughly startled. "But you are not going?" he asked earnestly.

"Not at present," she replied. "Mrs. Ewing wishes me to continue my work here with the children, and has very kindly invited me to come and live with them. My father's brother died a few days ago, leaving considerable property, I believe, both real and personal, and it seems necessary now that father should go to England to settle the estate."

Fred sat back in his chair with a sense of relief. "I am very glad to know, Miss Catherine, that you are not going to leave New York. It would be distressing to us all, especially to — I mean Agnes and I would miss you very much. I hope you will *never* go." She met his earnest look with a smile.

"Now, Mr. Drayton," said Catherine, "there is another subject that I want to speak to you about this evening, and I hope you will be no less interested in it."

He sat up and said to her, with an inquiring look, that suggested anxiety: "What is it, Miss Catherine?"

"Do you think," she asked, "that it would be possible to obtain a pardon for Joe Gannon?" Catherine had been nerving herself up to this ordeal for several days. From one point of view it seemed as though Fred Drayton was the last person in the world to appeal to in behalf of this unfortunate wretch. On the other hand, Fred's influence in his behalf, if it could be obtained — he having been the only victim of Gannon's criminal assault — would weigh more with the authorities than that of anyone else. Then Fred had interested himself so generously in behalf of the

mother and brother that Catherine felt sure his charity would not stop there. And besides, he was a lawyer and would know what steps to take in the matter. The present seemed a propitious moment to act, and so she suddenly determined to broach the delicate subject right then and there. "Mrs. Gannon," she continued, "is having a hard time to make the ends meet, and is afraid she will have to sell her furniture and give up her apartment."

"My dear Miss Catherine," said Fred, "nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see Joe Gannon pardoned and released from prison. I have been revolving the matter in my mind for several days, and wondering whether it would be wise for me to take any action in the case. I think if we go about it right, it can be accomplished. Governor Dix is an old friend of my father's. While he was in command here in New York, during the war, he used to visit us occasionally, and I have met him several times since. I think it would be well for us to get a letter from his former employers, saying all the good things they can regarding Joe's record while in their employ, and expressing the wish that

he should be pardoned. I think I can manage that part of the business myself. Then it would be well to have a similar note from Father Griffin, which I presume you can obtain. We might have a petition signed by a few others, asking the governor's clemency and favorable consideration of Joe's case. When the papers are ready, I will go to Albany myself and see the governor."

"Mr. Drayton," exclaimed Catherine, "I don't know how to thank you enough for your noble generosity. God will reward you for it, I am sure. It will be a great comfort to poor Mrs. Gannon to know what you are doing. I shall see her and tell her all about it to-morrow."

"If we are successful, Miss Catherine," he replied, "I shall be doubly rewarded — in the thought that we have brought happiness to the heart of this good woman, and in the knowledge that I have been permitted to do you any service."

"Fred Drayton! Catherine Sidney! Oh you runaways!" This exclamation came from Agnes, who entered the palm room on Lieutenant Hazelton's arm. "Lieutenant, isn't that what they called us one evening at

Mrs. Trumbull's, when they stalked into the conservatory and discovered us — discussing the merits of our mounts?"

"Precisely," said the lieutenant, and pursuing the idea suggested by the comparison, "I hope they are as heartily enjoying their little tête-à-tête here in this beautiful retreat as I did our discussion of the horses, in the conservatory."

"Quite right, lieutenant, so we are," replied Fred. "But then," he added, with a comical glance at Agnes, "there has been no floral pledge given here."

"That's a little joke at our expense, lieutenant," said Agnes. "Catherine, I will tell you all about it some time. But come, children, Mrs. Trumbull is saying 'good-night.'"

They hurried back to the parlor, where parting compliments were being exchanged. After a few words with Mrs. Ewing, Fred and Agnes bade "good-night" to her and Mr. Ewing and to Catherine, who was to spend the night there. On their way home Agnes remarked to Fred that Will Davidge had not been very agreeable to her; that when he spoke of Lieutenant Hazelton, he took occasion to say to her that an officer's life, in time of peace, was

a lazy, demoralizing one; that he had little to do but pay court to the ladies and gamble.

"Oh don't take Will Davidge too seriously," replied Fred. "Will is a good fellow and means well enough, but he makes a fool of himself sometimes. To use one of his own favorite slang expressions, he 'talks through his hat.'"

Agnes laughed at Fred's description, and they both reached home in good spirits. In fact, as he helped her off with her wraps in the parlor, he caught her in his arms, spun about the room with her, and then as he let her go, mussed up her hair with his fingers and escaped into the hall. She looked up laughing, with her dishevelled hair hanging over her face, and called out: "I'll pay you back for that with interest, young man."

As they bade each other "good-night" a little later, in the upper hall, she looked up into his face with a roguish smile and said: "Freddie boy, what was it that put you in such good spirits to-night? Was it the brandy you tasted in the smoking-room, or the still sweeter nectar that you sipped with the Casta Diva in the palm room?"

"Agnes, dear," he replied, with a serio-

comical look, "I think it was Lieutenant Hazelton's pretty stories."

She gave him a smart box on the ear and ran off to her room.

Fred lost no time in getting to bed, for he had determined to rise early and enter at once upon the work he had promised to undertake in behalf of the Gannons. It was long after midnight, however, when he fell asleep, for his mind was filled with sweet day-dreams — those jealous little tyrants that rule the heart and dominate the brain, shutting out all sleep.

XX

Through Central Park

THE first thing that Fred did the following morning was to draw up a petition, addressed to the governor, asking for the pardon of Joseph Gannon, stating concisely the reasons therefor — the previous excellent record of the man; the fact that the crime of which he had been convicted was the first charge ever brought against him; that it was committed as a result of excessive drinking; that his mother was a widow; that since Joseph's conviction her only other son had died; and that she, an estimable, honest woman, advanced in years and not in good health, had no means of support, except such work as she could obtain from day to day, and which was necessarily uncertain, etc. Immediately after breakfast he hurried out and obtained a half dozen signatures to the petition from gentlemen in the neighborhood, before they had left home for

business. Then he called on Joe's former employers, made himself known, asked their signature, and further requested a letter from them to the governor, saying all the good things they could about Gannon and strongly urging his pardon. They told him they would be glad to do it, not only for Joe's sake — they said he was a good-hearted fellow, and before he took to drink a first-class workman — but because they thought it a most generous act for the man who had been the victim of a criminal assault, to ask pardon for his assailant, and he should not be refused any reasonable request.

When he returned home, late in the afternoon, he told Agnes what he had been doing and asked her to call that evening with him on Miss Catherine. Of course she was pleased with the idea and gladly accepted his invitation. Catherine herself had not been idle, and when Fred told her that evening what he had accomplished, she showed him three letters she had obtained, as he had suggested — one from Father Griffin, one from Mr. Aylward, the president of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference of St. Stephen's Church, and another from Dr. Eaton.

After mutual congratulations over the progress they had made in the good work, Agnes turned to Catherine and said: "I heard you remark last night, Catherine, that you had not been to the theatre this winter and only twice to the opera. I am afraid you are working too hard. Tell me, what do you find to amuse you? What recreation do you take?"

Catherine smiled at this artless little speech. "Why, my dear," she replied, "my work is recreation to me; I enjoy it. And Mrs. Ewing does everything in the world to make my duties agreeable and to make me perfectly comfortable. I am going there next week, you know, to remain — after father and mother have gone," she added; and a serious expression came over her face. "I am afraid I shall become very self-indulgent then. You know, Agnes dear, since we have lived here in New York our circumstances have been such that I could not give much time or attention to recreations of any sort. In England my favorite pastime was horseback riding."

"O Catherine!" exclaimed Agnes, "I'm delighted to know that. Why didn't you tell us before? Why, my dear, Fred and I

go out almost every day, and we should be so glad to have you with us. We have two or three saddle horses in the stable that are simply growing lazy from want of use. It would positively be a charity for you to give them a little exercise. I am sure Catherine would like Dolly, don't you think so, Fred?"

"Dolly is certainly a beauty and rides well under the saddle," he replied.

"Now, Catherine, that's settled. When will you go with us? What time in the day will suit you best? You have a habit?"

"Oh yes, I have everything of that sort. Why, Agnes, I could go at any hour on Saturdays; on other days I should have to take the afternoon. And the first half of next week I expect I shall be very busy helping mother and father. They sail on Wednesday."

"Would eight o'clock be too early?" asked Fred.

"No, indeed," she exclaimed. "I am up every morning at six o'clock."

"Then, if agreeable to you, Miss Catherine, Agnes and I will call next Saturday morning at eight o'clock. That's the time we generally start out."

"It will be quite agreeable to me," she

replied. "And I do think it is very kind of you both to think of me. I am afraid I shall be a little awkward when I first attempt to mount, it is so long since I have ridden."

"Imagine Miss Catherine Sidney being awkward about anything," said Agnes, as she pressed her hand affectionately. "I shall think of nothing else now but the pleasure of having you with us on our outings. Come, Freddie, Catherine is very busy these days, packing, I know. It's an imposition for us to take up so much of her time."

"Oh no, Agnes dear, it is not. Please don't hurry."

But they had risen, and after a few further pleasant words said "good-night."

Fred and Agnes were on Lexington Avenue promptly at eight o'clock Saturday morning, Fred mounted on his bay gelding, Duke, Agnes riding her favorite Kitty, and the groom leading a third horse, Dolly, for Miss Catherine's use. Fred dismounted and ran up the steps. As he did so she opened the door and greeted them cordially.

"Oh what a beauty!" she exclaimed, as she beheld the well-groomed animal that stood

waiting for her. As there was no stepping-stone at the curb, Fred insisted that she should place her foot in his hand. She did so, and seizing the pommel with her left hand, sprang into the saddle with an ease which plainly indicated that she was perfectly at home in it.

"My dear," said Agnes, who was watching her every movement, "I guess we won't say anything more about 'awkwardness.' Why, I should think you had been doing that all your life."

"I have not been in the saddle for more than three years," she replied, carefully adjusting her long skirt, with Fred's assistance, "but it seems as natural to be here as though I had ridden every day."

They made their way north through Fifth Avenue, and turned into the bridle path at Central Park, quickening their pace as they did so. Fred was on the right, with Miss Catherine next to him. They were all good riders, and many a head was turned as they passed by, laughing and chatting merrily, to admire the handsome, dashing trio.

"How does it seem, Catherine?" called out Agnes, as they reined in their horses after

a mile of as brisk riding as the Park regulations permitted.

"Perfectly grand," she replied. "Can you imagine anything more exhilarating? It always seems to me, when I am mounted on a good horse, that I am 'monarch of all I survey.'"

"And so you are this morning," said Fred, lifting his hat as he turned and met the animated expression of delight in her face.

Roses were in her cheeks, and her beautiful brown eyes twinkled merrily as she smiled in reply. "I'm in love with my horse," she said, patting the animal's neck. "She rides so delightfully and seems to enjoy the sport as much as any of us. I sometimes wonder whether the dumb creatures don't understand us and share in our enjoyment. At all events, it makes me happier to think they do."

"I haven't the least doubt in the world that they do," replied Fred. "I am sure Duke understands me. When he is led to the door in the morning and I go out to meet him, he gives me a look, as he turns his ears, which says as plainly as though he spoke, 'Good-morning; I'm ready for the fun; are

you?' And when I speak kindly to him, pat his neck and say 'Good boy!' he looks straight ahead, or turns his head away in an embarrassed sort of manner. And I am perfectly sure, from the way Dolly carries her head and steps off, that she is delighted with her rider this morning."

Catherine and Agnes both laughed heartily at Fred's ingenuous description.

"I don't believe there is a more intelligent horse in the world than Kitty," said Agnes. "She understands every word and act of mine. When I look serious, she holds her head down and seems indifferent to everything around. When I laugh, she holds her head up and looks as though she were satisfied with all the world." Agnes spoke seriously and looked as though she didn't expect anyone to question what she said. "Catherine, have you ever ridden 'cross country'?" she asked.

"Oh often at home," replied Catherine; "generally after the hounds, and over indescribable paths and by-ways. And when the sport was real, I always strove to be in 'at the death.'"

"I am delighted to hear you say so!" ex-

claimed Agnes. "We are going out to Oakhurst, our summer home, in Westchester County, the first of June, and I shall insist upon having a visit from you there. If you love the country and the charms of real country life, you will enjoy it, I am sure, and it will give me a world of pleasure to have you with us and to introduce you to my favorite haunts. Isn't it glorious, Fred, at Oakhurst?"

"I enjoy every hour of my life there," he replied, "and I am sure it will be much more attractive if you can persuade Miss Catherine to visit us."

"Why, the thought of going is perfectly delightful," she said; and then, after a moment's hesitation, added: "that is, if I can possibly make my arrangements to do so."

"There must be no 'if' about it," Agnes declared very positively. "It is settled that you are to go." And giving Kitty a smart touch with her crop, she led the way on another brisk run, which in a few minutes brought them to the northern limit of the park. She would have gone on further north, suggesting that they take in the Boulevard

and Harlem Lane and cross the Macomb Dam Bridge. But Fred realized that Miss Catherine had not been in the saddle for a long time, and knew that it would be imprudent for her to prolong the ride. He therefore turned to Agnes and said: "I think we had better defer the Boulevard and Harlem Lane. When one is out of practice it is just as well to resume horseback riding gradually."

Miss Catherine smiled, and Agnes, taking the hint, immediately faced about, making herself a pivot for the others to turn on. They took the westerly road returning, and reached Lexington Avenue within an hour and a half of their start. Stephen was there waiting for them, and as he took the bridles of the two horses, Fred sprang to the ground and helped Miss Catherine to dismount. He escorted her to the parlor, and when she attempted to thank him, he interrupted her with the assurance that it was the pleasantest ride that he had ever had in his life. She smiled as she accepted his hand, and said: "A good-by, with my love, to Miss Agnes."

He held her hand long enough to say: "I

am sure that will be a very sweet message to her."

As they turned the corner and rode rapidly towards Madison Avenue, Agnes said enthusiastically: "Isn't she splendid?"

"She is certainly a lovely girl," he replied.

XXI

A First Communion

ON the following Wednesday, May the fourteenth, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney sailed for Liverpool on the "Baltic." The White Star steamer bearing that name at the time of our story was not, to be sure, quite the equal of the sister ship that afterwards inherited her name, and which was launched in 1904. Nevertheless, she was the "ocean greyhound" of her day, having made that year the "record" trip between New York and Queenstown — seven days twenty hours and nine minutes.

Of course Fred and Agnes were at the pier to see them off and wish them *bon voyage*, as were also, among other friends, Dr. and Mrs. Eaton. Mrs. Sidney found in her stateroom, when she entered it, a beautiful bouquet, with Fred Drayton's card attached, and a basket of fruit addressed to Mr. Sidney.

The usual scenes on the boat and on the

pier, when an ocean steamer is about to sail on her long voyage, were witnessed this morning—sorrowful good-byes here, gladsome good wishes there, excitement everywhere.

As they were leaving the steamer Dr. Eaton took Fred by the arm and said to him: "Fred, our little Bess makes her first communion next Saturday, at the Sacred Heart Convent, Manhattanville. She went into retreat there this morning. It occurred to me that you and Agnes might like to be present with us on that occasion, which, of course, is one of great interest to her mother and myself."

"We shall certainly esteem it a great privilege to be with you," replied Fred.

"I thought," continued the doctor, "that you would both be interested, if you have never witnessed such a ceremony. Miss Catherine Sidney goes up Friday, as she has a number of friends among the ladies of the Sacred Heart and is to assist them in their musical programme. She will return Saturday afternoon with Bess. We shall start at half-past seven, as the services begin at nine and we wish to be there a little ahead of time. We will call for you *en route*."

"Thank you very much, doctor; we will

be ready," said Fred, as he hurried forward to meet Miss Catherine, who was coming down the gangplank. He insisted upon her riding home with Agnes and himself.

The following morning Fred took an early train to Albany, where, after dining at the old Delevan House, he called on Governor Dix and presented his petition for the pardon of Joe Gannon. The governor received him cordially, and at the end of a half-hour's interview promised to give the matter his careful consideration. As Fred had an hour or more of leisure before the departure of his train, he called on the Rev. Clarence A. Walworth, then living in Albany, to whom Dr. Eaton had given him a letter of introduction. Father Walworth, himself a convert and a member of a distinguished New York family, was one of the founders of the Congregation of Paulist Fathers, in the city of New York, in the year 1858, his associates being, all of them, American converts — Fathers Hecker, Hewitt, Deshon, and Baker. He was the first Catholic priest that Fred had met, with the exception of Father Griffin of St. Stephen's, whom he met casually at the Gannons' apartment. He spent a de-

lightful hour with the reverend gentleman and carried away, as a little memento of his visit, a pocket edition, in Latin, of the "De Imitatione Christi."

An early drive through Central Park on a bright May morning is an inspiration, and our friends, the Eatons and the Draytons, leaving Madison Avenue at half-past seven on Saturday morning, the seventeenth, in an open carriage, enjoyed every moment of it. They were surprised at the great number of people they met at so early an hour, old and young, rich and poor, riding and driving and walking; all, like themselves, enjoying the fresh, fragrant air of the spring morning and the beautiful panorama of buds and blossoms and young foliage, still wet with the dew.

After discussing for some time the various points of interest which they passed, the doctor remarked: "Fred, I presume you have never visited the convent at Manhattanville and have never met any of the ladies of the Sacred Heart."

"No, doctor, I never have," he replied. "And I am very glad you are giving me the opportunity of meeting them to-day."

"Well, I ought to tell you something about them. They are a religious order, which was founded the first year of this century in France, when that wonderfully versatile nation was suffering from the dreadful fruits of the Revolution and the Reign of Terror. Her First Consul, Napoleon, with consummate skill, was reorganizing and centralizing the government of the country. The bishops and priests were laboring earnestly to heal the terrible wounds inflicted upon the Church by the infidel governments of the previous decade — the Constituent Assembly, the Convention, and the Directory.

"The foundress of the Order was Madame Madeleine Sophie Barat, a remarkable woman, who, with Madame Bailly and a few other noble souls, consecrated her life to the service of God in the education of young girls, and for that work founded this great teaching order. From its humble beginning in a little house at Amiens, its growth throughout France, and, within a few years, throughout the civilized world, was phenomenal.

"They came to this country in the year 1818 — the pioneers in the noble missionary work being Mesdames Duchesne, Berthold,

and Audé. Their voyage, of course, was made in a sailing vessel — the 'Rebecca' — and after more than two months on the ocean they landed near New Orleans. Their first permanent foundations were in Louisiana.

"The first school of the Order here in New York was established in 1841, by Madame Aloysia Hardey — the first American daughter of the Society — a woman whose name should hold a distinguished place in the annals of American history, as it does to-day in the hearts of thousands of American men and women. She was born in Maryland, but entered the Order in Louisiana, whither her father had emigrated while she was a child.

"Their first three years in this city were spent in the old building on the corner of Houston and Mulberry Streets, which is now occupied as an academy by the Sisters of Mercy. In 1884 they removed to Astoria — or Ravenswood, as the place was called. Three years were spent there also; and then, in 1847, with the approval and assistance of Bishop Hughes, they purchased the old Lorillard estate in Manhattanville. That's where we are going now. Of course they have added materially to the old mansion,

to meet the requirements of a young ladies' academy; but in doing so they have greatly enhanced the beauty of the place.

"Mother Hardey, after more than thirty years of laborious and remarkably successful work as Superior and Vicar, was recently appointed Assistant General and Visitatrix of the Order, which necessitates her residence in Paris. Her successor as Vicar of the New York Province is Mother Jones, a convert and a member of a distinguished New York family. We shall meet her, I trust, this morning, as well as Mother Galwey, the local Superior at Manhattanville."

They had already entered the convent grounds, at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, and were driving up the little hill through the winding road that led to the house. The old building, so affectionately remembered by many old pupils — which was destroyed by fire some twenty years ago — was not as large or modern as the structure which has replaced it; but in architectural beauty it was much more attractive. The chapel, which was built on to the old Lorillard mansion — and which was designed by one of the ladies of the Society —

was a little model of artistic taste, and very devotional.

Our friends were welcomed cordially by Mother Galwey, in the large parlor at the left of the main entrance; and after a few greetings between friends and acquaintances, they were shown to the chapel, where seats had been reserved for them. Fred and Agnes, who knelt with the others, for the first time in a Catholic church, were profoundly impressed by everything they saw and heard during the hour they spent there. The beautiful little marble altar was covered with sweet, fresh flowers; as were the altars of the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, in the alcoves at the right and left of the sanctuary, and the whole chapel was filled with delicious fragrance. The candles were already lit upon the altars, the ladies of the Order were kneeling in their stalls on either side of the chapel, and the pupils of the school, all wearing veils, filled the benches with the exception of the three front ones on either side of the aisle, which were reserved for the friends of the first communicants. The little orchestra, occupying the gallery at the rear, consisted of two violins, a harp, and a cello, with the organ accompaniment.

Shortly after they had taken their seats, the silence was broken by the sweet strains of Handel's "Largo," and while this was being played the six little first communicants entered the sanctuary from the sacristy. They were dressed in white, wore white veils, and each one carried a large wax candle — her first communion candle, which will be kept for years to come as a sacred memento of this happy day. All present were profoundly impressed by the beautiful, edifying appearance of these young angelic souls. As they walked slowly to the front of the altar, their eyes were cast down, their young faces reflected the spirit of recollection, and they were apparently oblivious to everything surrounding them. Their minds and hearts were, in fact, wholly preoccupied with the great step they were about to take; with the sweet thought that their Divine Lord was about to enter their young hearts for the first time in the adorable sacrament of His love.

Grander music may perhaps be heard in the opera house, when some one of the great works of the German or Italian masters is well performed, or at the oratorios or symphony concerts. No sweeter music ever fills

the ear, lifting the soul to the God of infinite love and beauty, than that which may be heard on such an occasion as this in the chapel of the Academy of the Sacred Heart. Stirred himself with profound emotion, Fred glanced at his friend, Dr. Eaton, and was not surprised to see the tears coursing down his cheeks.

At the Offertory of the Mass the orchestra played Godard's "Adagio Pathétique." At the Consecration the "Ave Vivens Hostia," a trio by Rheinberger, was sung, Miss Catherine Sidney taking the contralto; and after the Communion, Mendelssohn's trio, "Laudate Pueri," was beautifully rendered.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the visitors returned to the parlor, where they had the pleasure of meeting Mother Jones. While they were conversing with her, little Bess ran into the parlor and threw herself into the arms of her mother and father, and then received the congratulations of her other friends. Miss Catherine also came in, and was the recipient of many compliments — especially from Fred.

The young communicants, who, of course, were fasting, were presently called to their breakfast, and the visitors, also, were in-

vited to the dining-room, to partake of refreshments.

As they drove away, through the beautiful grounds of the convent, passing many little bands of pupils walking with their devoted teachers over the lawns, Agnes, who had been rather silent, said: "Mrs. Eaton, I cannot tell you how much I thank you and Dr. Eaton for the pleasure you have given us this morning. It was one of the most exquisitely beautiful ceremonies I have ever witnessed in my life. I have enjoyed every moment of it."

"I was deeply impressed," added Fred, "and I shall never forget it."

XXII

Oakhurst

THE first of June found the Draytons at Oakhurst, their summer home in Westchester County — not far from Chappaqua. It was one of the most attractive places in that charming district, embracing about two hundred acres, one third of which was woodland. The family residence was a spacious old building, originally constructed in the colonial style of architecture. When Mr. Drayton came into possession of the property, he introduced such modern improvements as were possible and made some additions which materially changed the exterior appearance of the house. Originally there was, in front, a semicircular porch, extending out some ten feet from the entrance, supported by four large white pillars and having half a dozen broad steps leading to the walk. To this had been added a broad veranda, extending along the whole front of

the house and on both sides. The front hall was large, with a winding staircase, at the rear, in bird's-eye maple. On either side of the hall there was a large parlor, with a library and sitting-room in the rear of one of these and the dining-room adjoining the other, with large sliding doors between. An extension had been added to the rear of the library, which afforded a sleeping-room, with bath, on the first floor and two additional chambers on the second. The kitchen and laundry were also modern additions.

The house stood some three hundred feet from the public road, on a broad plateau about twenty-five feet above the surrounding country. A few feet from the broad gate stood a pretty little porter's lodge, built by the present owner; and the carriage road from the gate to the house, extending to the right and left, was shaded by elms and enclosed an oval lawn, in the centre of which was a very pretty fountain. The basin of this, some twenty feet in diameter, was laid in cement, with topping of granite and marble. In the centre, upon a heavy stone foundation, rising by steps to the level of the surrounding wall, three bronze water nymphs supported

a large bowl, from which a spreading jet of water was thrown upward five or six feet and fell in a graceful spray to the pond below. Scattered about on the velvety lawn were a number of ornamental trees — mountain ash, tamarack or larch, white birch, and Norway spruce. And here and there rustic benches were placed, under or near the trees. The barns, which were modern in construction, were located on the opposite side, two hundred and fifty feet from the house. East of these, on a private road that led to the highway, stood the farmer's house.

One of the most attractive features of Oakhurst was a pond situate about three hundred yards west of the dwelling, at the foot of the plateau; an irregular sheet of water, perhaps a half mile in circumference. Mr. Drayton was not a man of much sentiment, but he took great pride in his country seat and wanted everything of the best. He had expended a good deal of money on the "Little Lake," as it was called, and Agnes had been the moving spirit as well as the directing mind in most of the improvements made there. It was only necessary for her to say: "Papa, I think we ought to have so and so," or "The Little

Lake would be improved by such and such an addition." The work was undertaken and completed according to her plans. If Fred suggested any new idea on the subject, his father generally replied: "I think you are right; talk it over with Agnes and see what she thinks about it." And Fred called it "Agnes' Frog Pond." The borders of the Little Lake were beautifully cultivated all the way around, with green lawns, interspersed with rockeries, artistically shaped flower beds, shrubs, and ferns; and the willows, evergreens, and birch trees, at irregular intervals, were near enough to be reflected in the water. Several little rustic bridges, over inlets from the pond and spanning the stream that flowed into it, added to the picturesque scenery.

Directly east of the residence were the flower garden and the hothouses, which covered an irregular shaped plot of two acres or more. These were under the supervision of John Brody, one of the best practical landscape gardners in Westchester County, who with his wife and two children occupied the lodge.

North of the barns and the farmer's house

was a broad stretch of open country — meadows and pasture land — and beyond this, fields of grain, shielded by woods of oak, pine, and chestnut.

Agnes had invited a party of their city friends to spend a week at Oakhurst early in June, and since her arrival she had been very busy setting things to right. The lawns and winding roads and paths in every direction were put in perfect condition, the trees and shrubs trimmed, the barns thoroughly renovated, and John Brody had outdone himself in his efforts to make the garden the most attractive spot on the estate.

Dr. Eaton, with his wife and Miss Catherine, came on an early train; Miss Mary Trumbull and her cousin, Lieutenant Hazelton, arrived an hour later and were followed by Will Davidge — who lived only a mile away. They all received a cordial greeting, and each one was made to feel that he or she was especially welcome.

The afternoon and early evening were spent wandering about the grounds. Is there anything more delightful, for people who have been shut up in the city during a long winter, than to get away from the rushing, cease-

less crowds of the metropolis and, forgetting the cares and distractions of business or professional life, to visit the country in the spring or early summer. All nature, dressed in her richest coloring, seems to have taken on, as it were, a new lease of life; and it is impossible for a healthy mind not to partake of the spirit of youth and gladness with which the very atmosphere is redolent. The highest aspirations of the soul, the purest and best instincts of the heart, are awakened and stirred to action by the contemplation of the exquisitely beautiful face of nature, and listening to the sweet harmony that is uttered by a thousand voices, animate and inanimate, in all creation.

After dinner they all strolled out again on to the broad verandas and through the walks about the grounds. Fred begged Miss Catherine to entertain them with some music, and at his invitation she sat down at the piano and played Mendelssohn's "Spring Song"; then a fugue from Bach, and, as he still insisted, Gottschalk's "Last Hope."

The musical feature of the evening's programme concluded with a college song, "The Cruiskeen Lawn," in which they all joined,

and which left them in a merry, laughing humor.

Mr. Drayton begged for a rubber of whist — just one, he said — before retiring. He invited Mrs. Eaton to be his partner at the game, and Mrs. Drayton took the seat opposite the doctor. The young people, in the meantime, kept up a lively conversation on the front porch and were entertained by Will Davidge and Lieutenant Hazelton's stories.

At the end of the rubber — in which Mrs. Drayton and Dr. Eaton carried off the honors — the players rose and adjourned to the veranda, where Will was spinning one of his yarns. It related to a certain distinguished member of the medical profession in New York, whose name Will declined to mention. This gentleman had, among his clientele, a certain chronic patient, who was a lady of wealth. She suffered from no physical infirmity that medical skill could relieve, but as she seemed to derive a certain amount of comfort from the doctor's frequent visits, and as she was well able to pay for the luxury, her good physician had no scruples about sending in his quarterly bills for "professional services." One day she wrote him a note

saying that she was going to visit friends in St. Louis and would be absent for two months. Did he know of any thoroughly competent and reliable physician in the Western city that she might call upon in case of need? He replied that he had an old friend practising there whom, he felt sure, she would find entirely satisfactory in any emergency. And knowing that the hour of "need" would probably arise the day after she reached St. Louis — and being, moreover, just then in a rather jovial state of mind — he enclosed a note of introduction to the old saw-bones, reading about like this:

MY DEAR DOCTOR, — I send you herewith a golden goose. Pluck from her all the gold eggs you can, and send me back what is left.

"My friend told me this himself," said Will; "so I can vouch for its accuracy.

"It was not, to be sure, quite the thing for a gentleman to seal his letter of introduction. But then, you know, 'professional usage' sanctions most anything. He sealed the little missive with wax and despatched it to his anxious patient. When she saw the seal, her curiosity was actually aroused. Can you

imagine it? And, of course, she began to wonder what particular pathological disorder her worthy doctor laid most stress upon in her case. This very natural inquisitiveness became intensified every time she looked at that seal. She pinched the envelope between her fingers, held it up to the light, and as she fancied she could make out the letters 'go' in the writing inside, she began to think over anxiously all the diseases she ever heard of beginning with 'go' — gout, goitre, gourdy, going; going what? Into a decline, perhaps? That seal came off!

"My friend said that while he mourned the loss of the golden eggs, he realized he had unwittingly handed her the best prescription she had ever had in her life. But he has never had the pleasure of meeting her since."

As the laugh subsided which this little tale called forth, Will apologized to the doctor for revealing this chapter of professional gayety.

"Why, my dear boy," replied the doctor, "I can tell you a true story of a little occurrence in which a friend of mine was one of the actors, and in which professional indis-

cretion resulted in embarrassment, financial and otherwise. It happened in one of our Eastern provincial cities. He was called in consultation one day by a brother physician. The patient, a middle-aged spinster, was one of the plainest women he had ever seen. After a little examination and a good deal of talk with her, they retired to the library on the floor below. They did not notice, as they went in, that a door opening into an adjoining room was ajar. It seems that the invalid had asked her sister — who like herself was of a somewhat inquisitive turn of mind — to listen, after the doctors had visited the sick-room, and ascertain, if she could, just what they thought of her case.

"As they entered the library, the family physician turned to my friend and said: 'Well, doctor, what do you think of her?'

"'Why I think,' he replied, 'that she is the homeliest woman I ever saw in my life.'

"'You think she is homely, do you?' retorted the first gentleman. 'Just wait till you have seen her sister!'

"They heard the rustling of skirts in the adjoining room, and the door was closed with a slam. These professional gentlemen drove

away from that house wiser, but not happier, men. Good people, good-night," called out Dr. Eaton, as he vanished through the door.

The rest of the company were not long in following his example.

XXIII

How the Pledge was Redeemed

AFTER an early breakfast the next morning, the young people all started off on a horseback ride. Lieutenant Hazelton's Prince had arrived the day before, in the care of an orderly, and had been much admired by Agnes. She went to the stables herself, immediately after his arrival, and gave special directions as to his care and comfort.

Miss Catherine was given Dolly, Agnes rode Kitty, Fred was mounted on Duke, the lieutenant was at home on his own coal-black gelding, Prince, and Louis appeared on his little Meg. Miss Mary Trumbull and Will Davidge were also provided with good mounts and joined the party.

On reaching the highway they turned to the west, Agnes and the lieutenant leading the way, followed by Catherine and Fred, with Mary, Will Davidge, and Louis bringing

up the rear. As they rode on briskly, Agnes was evidently studying the "points" of the lieutenant's horse, while he was admiring the easy, graceful way in which she rode Kitty. Catherine and Fred were in high spirits, enjoying everything, but evidently more interested in each other than anything else. Miss Mary Trumbull, Will Davidge, and Louis were apparently unable to keep up with the others at first, but their laughter indicated that they were not greatly disturbed by that fact.

They had ridden on about two miles in this way when Agnes suddenly turned to her companion and said: "Lieutenant, are you ready to redeem your pledge?"

"What is that?" he asked.

"You certainly have not forgotten, Lieutenant, what you said about Prince's ability to follow Kitty across country — your engagement that you and Prince would follow me and Kitty, *pari passu*, over hedge and stream and be in with us at the finish. Would you like to give him a little trial this morning, just to prove what he can do?"

"Certainly, Miss Agnes," he replied. "I should be delighted."

"Then follow me," she called out. And turning abruptly to the right, she urged Kitty on sharply, cleared the stone fence, and was chasing across the field before the lieutenant fully realized what she had proposed. The quick movement had a magnetic effect on both rider and horse, and in a moment Prince had taken the fence and was racing forward to overtake the bold leader. Agnes gave a hearty laugh as her companion caught up with her, and they scampered on, side by side, at breakneck speed. Reaching the first rail fence, they cleared it together. Just as they were approaching the second, Agnes reined in Kitty a little and fell behind ten or fifteen feet. The lieutenant, looking around, was about to check his horse also, but Agnes called out: "Go on, go on; we will follow." And he did so, with Agnes and Kitty sufficiently in the rear for her to see just how Prince acted as he made the leap and how he landed on his feet.

"Very well done!" she exclaimed, laughing, as the horses were again abreast. The lieutenant smiled, but she thought he looked a bit nervous. "We are coming now," she said, "to a ten-foot stream; can Prince take

it? If you are not quite sure, don't let him try. Kitty is so used to these little jumps that she doesn't mind them."

He looked ahead earnestly, and as they approached the brook, leaned forward in the saddle, whistled to Prince, and in a stern voice called out: "Go on, sir — go." The animal responded to his call and made a desperate effort to clear the stream; but as he landed his hind feet struck the loose sod of the opposite bank and went down. As the horse keeled over on to his right side, Hazelton sprang skilfully from the saddle, but found himself standing in three feet of water, with Prince floundering about dangerously near him. As quickly as possible he seized the bridle and got the horse on to his feet in the water; then succeeded in mounting him and, proceeding up the stream a few feet to a point where the bank was low, emerged from the water.

Kitty had cleared the ditch easily and landed securely on all fours on the opposite side. The impetus carried her forward a few yards; but Agnes reined her in quickly, and turning back, dismounted, ready to render any assistance in her power. She looked

anxiously at the horse and rider, called out: "Lieutenant, are you hurt?" and followed them up the stream to the point where they came out. The officer was not injured — physically; but he felt mortified, and his face wore an expression of disgust. Prince was excited, danced about, and shook his head.

"No damage done, not the slightest," he exclaimed, as he sprang to the ground and proceeded to examine the saddle girth and bridle. Satisfying himself that all was right, he turned to Agnes with a guilty smile on his face and said very deliberately: "Well, Miss Drayton, what *do* you think of that performance?"

The look of anxiety which she had worn at first had gradually left her face, and she now seemed to be making an effort to repress a smile. As he addressed this question to her, she surveyed him for a moment with a quizzical expression, and then burst out laughing. "Are you wet, lieutenant?" she asked in the most innocent tone, looking at his clothes dripping with water and his boots covered with slimy mud.

"Just a trifle," he replied, trying to make

the best of an awkward situation. "But Prince and I have learned a good lesson, I think. Come, let us try it again. The horse will need a little exercise now, to keep his joints from getting stiff." -

"Not this stream again to-day," she replied; "there is plenty of exercise for us ahead before we strike the main road." And seizing the pommel with her left hand, as she gathered up her skirts with the other, she sprang into her saddle, to the astonishment of her military escort. He quickly followed suit. But Prince, who had not yet recovered from his exciting experience, was not inclined to be altogether docile. He reared and pranced about and shook his head, as though disinclined to go any further. His rider used a little gentle suasion, talking to him kindly and patting his neck. Agnes watched the animal's movements, and when finally he bounded off at such a rapid pace that she had to use her crop on Kitty to keep abreast, she looked as though she had made up her mind decidedly about something. Two or three more fences and a four-foot hedge were taken before they reached a cross-road, by which Agnes decided they had

best return home, so as not to meet the other riders *en route*.

The latter had continued straight on for a mile beyond the point at which Agnes and the lieutenant had turned into the field. There Fred and Catherine, turning to the right, followed a road which led through the oak and pine woods, over a little hill, to the western highway, which, some three miles east, skirted the Drayton estate. As they were walking their horses leisurely up the hill, their attention was attracted by a little barefooted boy, who was sitting by the roadside crying. Miss Catherine reined in her horse at once and called out to him: "What's the matter, little boy?"

Looking up at her with a wry face and tears in his eyes, he replied in a blubbering voice: "I've — lost — my berries."

There was blood on one side of his face, and his clothes, such as he had on — for his legs were bare from his knees down — were soiled with mud. A few feet from him a little tin pail lay upset on the ground and a few strawberries were strewn on the edge of the ditch, pointing the way to where the rest of them had gone.

Catherine took in the situation at a glance, and throwing her rein to Fred, jumped to the ground. Making her way to where the little fellow sat, she stooped over him and wiped the blood from his face and the tears from his eyes, and in the kindest, motherly tone said to him: "Why, my poor little fellow, you have hurt yourself! How did you do that?"

"I was jumping — across — the ditch — and I fell — and spilt all my berries." And sticking his knuckles into his eyes, he began to cry again.

"Don't cry," she said, taking him by the hand and helping him to his feet. "What is your name and where do you live?"

"My name is Tommy Connors and I live on the cross-roads below," he replied. "My father works on Mr. Drayton's farm."

Catherine looked up and smiled at Fred, who had dismounted and approached as closely as he could, holding the bridles of both horses.

"Why, certainly," he said, "I know John Connors very well — one of the best men on the place."

The little fellow looked up with a pleased

expression in his eyes, and Catherine saw that he had an honest, handsome face. "How many berries had you in your pail when you fell?" she asked.

"I had more than a quart," he replied; and there were indications that tears were coming again to the surface.

But she drew him closer to her, and patting his cheek, asked: "How much do you get a quart for your berries?"

"Eight cents, ma'am," he replied, looking very serious.

"Well," she began slowly, feeling in her pocket for something.

"No, no!" exclaimed Fred. "If you please, those are my berries." And drawing two bright silver quarters from his pocket, he handed them to the little fellow.

Tommy hesitated for a moment, looking first at Fred and then at Miss Catherine. As she smiled and nodded her head, he reached out his hand and received the money. He gazed at the silver for a moment, and then, looking up with a bright smile on his face, bowed and said: "Thank you, sir." Catherine picked up his straw hat and placed it on the back of his head, pinching his little chin

affectionately as she did so. He looked up into her face with childish wonder and admiration and said, with the utmost simplicity: "I wish my mother could see you."

"Indeed, I wish I could see her," she replied, bending over and looking straight into his big eyes, "just to tell her what a dear, good boy you are. Good-by," she said, patting him on the shoulder. "The next time you jump over a ditch with a pail of berries in your hand, be sure of your footing."

"Good-by, ma'am, good-by," he replied quite seriously, lifting his hat. "Good-by, sir, and thank you very much," turning to Fred.

As they mounted their horses, Miss Mary Trumbull, Will Davidge, and Louis rode up. They had lingered behind to gather some wild roses. "What's the matter?" called out Miss Mary.

"Oh nothing," replied Fred; "buying berries."

"Ah!" exclaimed Davidge; "and what do you pay for that kind in this part of the world?" glancing at the scattered berries that decorated the side of the ditch.

"Fifty cents a quart," replied Catherine.

"I wouldn't take fifty dollars for my share in that quart," said Fred in an undertone. Catherine gave him a smile of approval, as they started their horses off on a smart gait.

When they reached the house, they learned that Agnes and Lieutenant Hazelton had arrived some minutes earlier and had retired to their rooms. As soon as he had seen to the comfort of his friends, Fred ran upstairs and knocked on Agnes' door. As usual, when anything of an interesting character had happened, he wanted to compare notes with his sister. She admitted him at once, and turning the key of the door, she seized his arm, and laughing in the most comical way, led him to the sofa.

"Fred, what I am going to tell you is *awfully* confidential. Don't you say a word to anyone about it."

"Why, Agnes, what has happened?" he asked, looking at her with some uneasiness. "Has the lieutenant already proposed?"

The smile left her face and for a moment she looked almost serious.

"Nonsense, Fred! Don't think we are so silly. But you should have seen us going over Brocton Brook, just above the dam."

And she burst out laughing again, as she laid her head upon his shoulder.

"Agnes," he exclaimed, "you don't mean to tell me that you let the lieutenant take that dangerous leap!"

"Of course I did," she replied. "He smiled very patronizingly when I suggested any possible difficulty in following where Kitty led the way, and I just thought I would put Mr. Prince and his gallant rider to the test." And she described to him what had happened. When she told him how Prince had missed his footing, keeled over, and dumped the lieutenant into the water, he looked at her anxiously. But when she depicted the scene as her gallant escort emerged from the stream, he and his wonderful charger both dripping with water and mud, he joined heartily in her laugh. "Why, of course," she said, "I was awfully sorry for the lieutenant, for I know he felt dreadfully mortified. But when you lords of creation put on such supercilious airs and treat the gentler sex as children who don't know how to take care of themselves without your help, I am quite reconciled to your being taken down a peg or two." And springing to her feet

with a spiteful little air, she marched to the bureau and proceeded to take down her hair. Fred looked at her with pride, and if she had turned and seen his face just then, she would have recognized that he agreed with her perfectly.

"You were not the only ones that met with an adventure," he said presently. "The lieutenant was not the only one that miscalculated distances and fell into the ditch this morning."

"What do you mean?" she asked, turning around quickly. "Did any of you have a fall?"

"Not exactly," he replied; "but a tumble there was, in which some of us were very much concerned." And he went on to narrate the circumstances of their meeting with little Tommy Connors.

As he proceeded, Agnes became so interested that she suspended operations before the mirror, turned around first to listen to his story, leaning backward against the bureau, and then walked over to the sofa and sat down near him, with comb in hand and her long dark hair streaming down over her back. When he had concluded, in a

tone and manner that indicated some emotion, she gave him a loving, sympathetic look and said gently: "Fred, I think Catherine Sidney is one of the sweetest women I ever knew in my life." His only reply was to kiss her affectionately; and he left the room.

In the afternoon Dr. and Mrs. Eaton went out with Mr. and Mrs. Drayton for a long drive, and the young people amused themselves boating on the Little Lake and playing tennis. In the game Agnes and Lieutenant Hazelton beat Catherine and Will Davidge badly. Catherine was a good player, but out of practice. Her partner seemed ill at ease and did not play his usual game. The fact that Agnes had the lieutenant as her partner may have accounted in a measure for this.

That evening, as they were all enjoying themselves on the veranda, Agnes turned to the lieutenant, who sat near her, and said: "Lieutenant Hazelton, I have a favor to ask of you. Will you grant it?"

"Anything in the world, Miss Agnes, if it be in my power."

"I want to ride Prince to-morrow," she said. If she had asked him to stand on his head or dance a hornpipe he could not have been

more surprised, and certainly would not have been more reluctant to grant her request.

"My dear friend," he replied, "you do not know what you are asking. Prince is a splendid horse, and I am proud of him; but he is inclined to be a little vicious at times, and I have never dared to let any of my fellow-officers ride him, though they have often proposed it. I know his ways perfectly, and he seems to understand pretty well what I expect from him. But when there is any serious difference in our views, I generally have to do the yielding. I beg you will reconsider your request, Miss Agnes, and ask me something which I can do, not only with sincere pleasure, but without any anxiety on your account."

"So you think, do you, lieutenant, that perhaps I couldn't manage Prince?"

"I fear," he replied, "that you might have some difficulty in doing so; and if he happened to be in one of his ugly moods, I should feel very anxious. He gets into a tantrum once in a while, and then he acts like a perfect little devil."

Agnes gave a merry laugh, as though she

anticipated nothing but fun from these equine capers.

"However," he continued, "if you really want to make the venture, after what I have told you, and if your father gives his consent, Prince is at your disposal."

"Thank you ever so much!" she exclaimed. "I appreciate all you say; but I have an idea that Prince and I will get on nicely together — that is, after we are thoroughly acquainted with one another. As to papa — I think he is at the other end of the piazza. Let us go at once and ask him what he thinks of my proposition."

Mr. Drayton was conversing with Mrs. Eaton as the young people approached. They stood waiting patiently until there was a lull in the conversation, and then, as Mrs. Eaton looked up smiling at them, Agnes said: "Will you please pardon me, Mrs. Eaton and papa? The lieutenant and I have a little question awaiting solution, and it is *so* important, I fear I cannot be happy till the matter is settled. I have just asked him to let me ride his horse Prince to-morrow. He says the animal is sometimes ugly and behaves badly, and the lieutenant is afraid

I might have some difficulty in managing him. However, he says that, with that knowledge, if I care to try him and if you give your consent, Prince is at my service. So, papa dear, we await your verdict."

Mr. Drayton looked at them for a moment with an amused expression in his face; then turning to the young officer, said: "Lieutenant, have you had this horse for some time and have you often ridden him?"

"Oh yes," he replied, "I have had Prince about two years, and during that time I have ridden him nearly every day. But as Miss Agnes says, he is inclined at times to be somewhat vicious and unmanageable, and for that reason I have not allowed anyone else to ride him."

"What do you think about it, Agnes?" said Mr. Drayton, with an expression in his eye that plainly indicated there were no doubts at all in his mind and that he was proud, moreover, of his daughter's prowess.

"I think Prince is a splendid horse," she replied, "and if you have no objection, I would like very much to ride him."

"I have no objection at all," remarked Mr. Drayton.

"Thank you, papa dear," she said, bending over and kissing his forehead. She looked triumphantly at the lieutenant as they walked off together, and plans for the morrow were at once made known to the young people gathered at the west end of the veranda.

XXIV

A Thrilling Ride

AT nine o'clock the following morning the horses were at the door and the same party that had sallied forth the preceding day were on hand and mounted the same horses, except that Agnes and Lieutenant Hazelton changed places; Prince carried a side-saddle and Kitty, for the occasion, wore the regulation article — a "McClellan." Agnes herself inspected the girth, bridle, straps, etc., and as she mounted with the lieutenant's assistance, he said to her: "If you have no objection, I will direct the orderly to lead Prince as far as the gate, so as to avoid a start downhill."

"Very well," she replied, "that's quite agreeable to me."

"But," said the lieutenant, "I see you are carrying your whip. If you will pardon me, I would suggest that you do not use it on

Prince. I have found from frequent experience that he does not take at all kindly to that article."

"All right, I understand," she replied, with a good-natured smile.

Reaching the gate, she turned westward. The groom still held the bridle, and the officer stood by, watching closely to see that everything worked satisfactorily.

"Let us go," she said. "Everything is all right."

As the groom let go the bridle, he said to her in a low tone: "Watch his ears, Miss; if he puts 'em back, you have to look out for his tricks."

But now she held the reins and was mistress of the situation — unless Prince got beyond her control; and she had no fear of that. Raising her whip, she brought it down smartly on the animal's haunches. Stung by the unaccustomed lash, he sprang into the air, and as quickly as he landed, reared on his hind legs, his ears thrown backward. As he came down on his fore feet, she raised the whip again above her head and brought it down with such a whack that it left its mark. He sprang again, but this time for-

ward, and holding his head down, almost between his legs, bounded up the road. A third lash which she administered, as she held him with a firm rein, evidently convinced Prince that his work this morning was to be straight ahead, and he sped forward at what the groom described as "a two-mile clip."

While Agnes was getting her horse under control, the rest of the party were so agitated and nervous that they made no movement at first to follow her, and she had a lead of some two or three hundred yards when Lieutenant Hazelton leaped into his saddle and they all started in pursuit. She increased the distance between them, moreover, at every bound, so that when she turned into the southern cross-road, three miles west of the start, she led them by half a mile. Prince was apparently inclined from time to time to indulge in those "tantrums" that the lieutenant had warned Agnes against; for, as she rode on, they saw her whip raised several times and brought down vigorously on the animal's flanks.

When they reached the turn, she was out of sight, as the cross-road deflects slightly to

the left a mile or so further north and is buried in the woods. Fred and the lieutenant were riding a few rods in advance of the others, when Will Davidge turned to Miss Catherine and said: "I can't understand what that fellow was thinking about when he allowed Miss Drayton to ride that ugly, unmanageable beast."

"But he was very reluctant to do so, Mr. Davidge," she replied, "and only consented when she had obtained her father's approval. The event, so far, seems to prove that Mr. Drayton's confidence in Agnes was not misplaced. Still I am anxious, I confess, to see whether she is able to keep that splendid control over the horse to the end."

They were riding so rapidly that conversation was almost impossible, and little further was said by any of them at the time. They had proceeded only a short distance beyond the turn into the woods when they saw Agnes, nearly a mile away, coming at full speed towards them. They reined in their horses and waited for her. As she drew near she motioned to them with her whip to make way, and they promptly fell back on either side, their horses facing the road. She was

now riding against the wind; her hat had fallen over on to her back and her hair was dishevelled; her cheeks were flushed and her eyes lit up with intense animation. As she dashed on between their open ranks, she smiled gayly, and raising her whip once more above her head, brought it down triumphantly, for the last time, on the haunches of her thoroughly disciplined horse.

The scene was an exciting one for them all. For Fred it was thrilling, and raising his hat as she passed, and waving it above his head, he called out: "Good, Agnes, good for you!" And they all echoed his cry with vim.

Catherine, who was by his side, reached over and shook hands with him cordially as she said: "Mr. Drayton, you ought to be very proud of that sister of yours."

"Indeed I am," he replied enthusiastically, "and I am especially pleased to have you say so."

Agnes reined in her horse soon after passing them, and gradually brought him to a walk. Reaching the main road, she turned and waited for the others. Lieutenant Hazelton, riding in the lead, raised his hat as he approached, and saluted her. "Miss Drayton,"

bowing profoundly, "your obedient servant. We await your orders." She answered with a merry, hearty laugh.

"And how do you like Prince?" he asked.

"He's a splendid horse, and we have become well acquainted with each other, too; haven't we, Prince?" she said, leaning over and patting him on the neck. He lifted his head and turned his ears responsively. "But how do you like Kitty?" she asked.

"She is simply perfect," replied the lieutenant. "I have a suspicion, however, from her restlessness just at the present moment, that the little witch is a trifle jealous of Prince. But I don't think any the less of her on that account."

"Agnes, you have given us all a delightful surprise," said Miss Catherine. "We were just a little anxious when you started off; but our fears very quickly gave way to enthusiasm when we saw how splendidly you managed your horse."

"I think you are all leagued together to spoil me," cried Agnes, "and I *won't* be spoiled. Come, let us finish our race." And turning she led the way homeward, with

Lieutenant Hazelton riding at her side. Prince was perfectly docile and answered her every call promptly.

Needless to say, thereafter he was at Agnes' disposal whenever she cared to ride him.

XXV

Disciples of Izaak Walton

THAT evening, while they were still sitting over their coffee at the dinner table, Agnes said: "Now, my dear friends, I have two plans under consideration for to-morrow, and as I can't quite make up my mind which will afford you all the most pleasure, I have decided to take a vote. So which shall it be: shall we go trout-fishing early to-morrow morning — they tell me the sport is good this season, though I really know very little about it myself — or shall we drive over to the Chappaqua Club Tennis Court and see the tournament, which opens at ten o'clock? Mrs. Eaton, what do you say?"

"I vote we go fishing," she replied, knowing that her husband was passionately fond of the sport, though she cared little about it herself.

"Miss Catherine, what say you?"

"I am very fond of fishing," she replied.

"Mary, how do you vote?"

"For the tournament," she answered.

"Doctor, which shall it be?"

"I am quite agreeable to either proposition."

"With a strong leaning to the rod and line," added Mrs. Eaton.

"Doctor," said Fred, with a look of mock seriousness, "you will please bear in mind that this is a court of inquiry. Does Mrs. Eaton correctly interpret the inmost sentiments of your soul?"

"I suppose I ought to acknowledge, your Honor, that I am a rather enthusiastic disciple of Izaak Walton."

"Lieutenant Hazelton, how do you stand?"

"I too am partial to the allurements of the finny tribe."

"Mr. Davidge, it's your turn to stand up and be counted."

"I can't for the life of me see any fun," he replied, "in standing all day by the side of a little ditch, or mill-pond, tugging frantically at a stick and string, with a wiggling worm or fake fly at the other end of it, and watching one particular spot in the water as though

you expected some extraordinary treasure-trove to appear there suddenly."

There was an outburst of laughter at this comical description, although Will's blunt and rather selfish way of expressing his preference did not leave an altogether agreeable impression.

"Will, you are evidently not an enthusiastic angler," said Fred.

"Oh I think that sort of angling is idiotic," he replied. "I'd rather shoot peas out of a popgun."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Davidge," said Agnes, with a quizzical smile, "you know that in great questions like this the majority rules, and according to my count, you and Miss Mary are in a minority. The decision of the court, therefore, is that this family breakfast to-morrow morning at seven o'clock and break camp — lieutenant, is that right? — at seven-thirty sharp; with forty rounds of ammunition and one day's rations; move upon the piscatorial entrenchments of the finny tribe in open order, and — save the *pisces*. That right, Freddie boy?"

A round of applause greeted her sally, and they all arose from the table and proceeded

to the parlor and veranda. Miss Mary Trumbull lingered behind, and going up to Agnes put her arm around her and whispered: "I'm delighted at the decision. I didn't want a bit to go to the tournament, but Mr. Davidge nudged me and begged me to vote for the trip to the club, and, of course, I didn't want to be mean. *Savez?*"

A little laugh and a gentle pinch on the arm was Agnes' reply; and as they were entering the parlor together, she whispered: "Molly, I'm delighted that you and Mr. Davidge are getting on so splendidly together."

A deprecating frown on Miss Mary's face merely assured Agnes of what she really believed — that her friend, through a spirit of generous politeness, was playing a part not altogether agreeable to her.

Will Davidge realized, as he left the dining-room, that his selfishness and rude expression of opinion had left an unpleasant impression upon his friends, and at once set about correcting his mistake. He was a past master at story-telling, and despite his habit of using slang — which, in fact, often enhanced the humor of his anecdotes — he was gifted in this art of entertaining an audience. He

took a seat near Mrs. Eaton and Miss Catherine, and they were soon laughing so heartily at his fun that the others gathered around in a semicircle to listen to his stories. He had just been relating an adventure which a friend of his had with an amateur highwayman.

"I think you will have to repeat that little story, Mr. Davidge," said Mrs. Eaton.

"Let's have it, Will," said Fred.

"Once upon a time," said Will, "not so very long ago, there lived an Irishman over in Jersey. He had had quite a run of hard luck, and finally found himself on his beam ends. He had been a somewhat assiduous reader of a certain class of modern literature, popularly known as detective stories, in which the daring deeds and hairbreadth escapes of the cracksman are portrayed in glowing colors. Pat decided that, as necessity knows no law, the best thing he could do would be to take to the profession of a highwayman. And in order to be entirely in fashion he borrowed from a worthy compatriot of his a pistol — rather antique in make as well as appearance — still a formidable looking weapon. His friend told him it was rather rusty, the hammer broken, and that it hadn't been used

for at least twenty years. That, however, made slight difference with Pat. He was convinced that everything depended upon appearances.

"Selecting his field of operations, one evening, on a lonely road upon the outskirts of a suburban town, he turned up his collar, pulled his cap down over his ears, got his right hand on his shooting iron, and started out for business. He had not long to wait. He presently spied a well-dressed gentleman hurrying along with an air of freedom and prosperity in his gait. As he drew near, Pat sprang in front of him, and levelling his pistol at his head, shouted: 'Yer money or yer life!'

"The gentleman thus unceremoniously accosted started back so suddenly that his hat went off his head. But he realized that he was staring into the barrel of a six-inch shooter.

"'What do you want?' he asked, summoning up as much courage as he could command.

"'Yer watch and yer money, and be mighty quick or I'll blow yer damned head off!'

"My friend — that is, the gentleman thus appealed to — was a man of considerable resource and at once realized that he was

dealing with an Hibernian. He assumed a very complaisant manner and said quietly: 'Now, look here, Pat, I'll tell you what I will do; I will give you my watch and pocket-book if you will give me your pistol.'

"'It's a bargain,' said Pat.

"And my amiable friend, chuckling inwardly over his 'easy mark,' proceeded to empty his pockets and hand over his valuables to the amateur highwayman. The innocent Irishman received and stowed them away in an inner pocket, buttoned up his coat, and with a polite bow handed the pistol to the impoverished victim.

"Drawing back a pace, my shrewd business friend levelled the gun at the head of the villain and cried out: 'Give me back my property, you rascal, or I will blow your infernal brains out!'

"'That's right,' said Pat, 'blaze away. There's not a scrimption of powder in the bloomin' gun. Good-night, sir.' And being quite familiar with the devious paths of that quarter, the resourceful Irishman quickly disappeared from view, leaving his astonished victim to practise with the harmless weapon Pat had given him."

Everyone, of course, was amused, and laughed heartily at the *dénouement* of Will's funny story. He continued to make good use of his opportunity to put the whole company in pleasant humor by his laughable anecdotes. When they parted later in the evening, they all bade him a cordial "good-night." Such is the power of wit and humor in the hands of a skilful story-teller.

After they had all retired, Agnes went to Fred's room to talk over matters with him, as usual. He congratulated her affectionately upon her successful management of everything, and especially upon her splendid horsemanship that morning.

"Well, Fred," she said, "I have just been having a little talk with mamma, and she has given me some gentle hints which concern both you and me, and I expect we shall have to change our tactics slightly."

"Why, what do you mean?" he asked.

"Well, frankly, she means, I think, that we ought to divide up a little more — that is, at least, a little differently. I have been thinking it over and, following what I understand her suggestion to be, I have concluded that when we start out to-morrow morning

you and I had better ride in the carriage with Mrs. Eaton and Will Davidge and let Catherine and Mary ride with Dr. Eaton and the lieutenant — see?"

"Yes, I see," replied Fred, with a frown, "and I have no doubt that mother is quite right — she always is. But it's a case, certainly, of making a virtue of necessity, to fall in with that plan."

"Oh well," said Agnes, "when we get to the woods, we shall be all together again. What mamma means, I suppose, is that we must be careful not to appear exclusive in either giving or receiving attention."

"All right, Agnes; *verbum sat.* You go ahead and arrange everything as you think best. I'm entirely agreeable to any plan you decide upon. You show your discretion in placing two certain gentlemen in different carriages."

She laughed and bade him "good-night" affectionately.

XXVI

The Fishing Expedition

THE costumes at the breakfast table the following morning were variegated and picturesque, distinguished by that breezy nonchalance which has such a charm for gay youth when there is question of a real summer's outing. Négligé waists, with flowing ties, rainy-day skirts, and high boots were predominant. Each newcomer in the breakfast room was greeted with a round of applause. The conversation throughout the meal was of the merriest character; the noisy clinking of the dishes bespoke the nervous excitement of pleasant anticipation; and when the carriages were heard approaching the side entrance, there was a spontaneous start for the door. The arms and munitions for the day's campaign had been carefully prepared under Fred's directions, and were delightfully in evidence in the shape of rods, reels, game baskets, etc. The "rations,"

which were being prepared under Agnes' directions, were to follow later, under special convoy.

"Doctor, I am going to ask you and Lieutenant Hazelton to escort Miss Catherine and Miss Mary to the Elysian fields," said Agnes.

Dr. Eaton, who was the most enthusiastic member of the party this morning, sprang forward and almost lifted Miss Catherine into the carriage. The lieutenant, who was at first a little dazed at Agnes' announcement, quickly recovered himself and assisted Miss Mary to her seat; and the first carriage was off instantly, with calls of "good-by" from the quartette. Fred helped Mrs. Eaton into the second carriage; Agnes and Will Davidge followed, and waving a farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Drayton, who had come out to see them off, they hurried away to overtake the leaders.

Arriving at the point designated, they made their way through the wood a short distance on foot, to the beautiful mountain stream which here runs through an open field, shaded by oak and elm and walnut trees. The doctor and Miss Catherine proceeded up the

stream slowly, a few feet from the bank, consulting as to the best point of vantage.

Presently she stopped and said: "Doctor, I think that looks rather tempting. Suppose we try our luck here."

"I don't think we can do better," he replied. He insisted upon jointing her rod and attaching the reel for her; but she selected from her wallet the "dry-fly" she wanted and attached it to her leader.

"And now," she said, "the fun begins."

Holding her rod with both hands, her right guarding the reel, she swung it once around her head, and cast her fly so gracefully out on to the stream that the doctor exclaimed enthusiastically: "Bravo, Miss Catherine; *c'est magnifique.*" But her attention was now concentrated on her line; the fly had floated scarce a yard before there was a rise. Away went the line, and with the neatest little jerk, almost without effort, Catherine landed a half-pound speckled beauty at her feet. She picked it up quickly, removed the hook, which had pierced its lip only, admired it with a little smile of satisfaction, and said, as she handed it to the doctor: "Poor little

thing; I feel like throwing it back into the water."

"Well, just please restrain your feelings, Miss Catherine. That little chap is worth his weight in gold, and I'll show you his big brother in a moment." Indeed, the doctor was now as excited as a schoolboy, and could hardly take the necessary time to properly adjust his tackle.

Miss Catherine fumbled busily with her line, as though it needed some attention. As a matter of fact, she merely wanted to give her friend an opportunity to try his luck before making her second venture; and it required a little self-control for her to do so.

When he was ready, he stepped a few yards further up the stream, where he could safely cross on the rocks, returned to a point directly opposite Catherine's position — she had selected the west bank — and then, with a whiz, cast his fly and bent forward with eager gaze.

She watched his line for a moment, and seeing no disturbance, decided to make another trial herself. Away went the line, and the alluring bait rested on the water a few

feet from the other. Within ten seconds they witnessed a very pretty sight. A double rise and both flies disappeared simultaneously.

Is there anything more fascinating in the realm of sport than to see one's line thus flashed suddenly through the water, and to feel the slender rod bent sturdily by the game little fish, running away with the bait?

They both landed their catch; but the doctor gave such a vigorous jerk to his rod that the trout left the hook and fell a few feet from the bank. He scrambled so excitedly to secure it that he almost went into the water himself. Catherine laughed heartily as she saw him anxiously struggling to prevent an escape. He succeeded, and as he stepped back, held up the shining trophy for admiration.

Both were now enjoying the sport intensely, and each recognized in the other a genuine lover of the fascinating pastime.

In the meantime the others had taken their positions further down the stream. Will Davidge, with Agnes and Mary, was nearest them; while Fred, who was familiar with all the "good spots," had gone considerably further down the stream with Mrs.

Eaton and the lieutenant. Fred was an expert; the lieutenant, though less experienced, knew how to handle a rod; and Mrs. Eaton had occasionally cast a fly when off with the doctor on his fishing expeditions.

After about an hour Agnes wandered up the stream, on the east side, carrying her rod carelessly over her shoulder, and sat down on a rock near Dr. Eaton, to watch him and Catherine at their steady, earnest work. Presently Catherine called out to her from the other side: "What sort of luck have you had?"

"Not quite what you and the doctor are having," she replied. And then, holding her hand to one side of her face, in a confidential manner she called out in a loud whisper: "Mary has caught one; I bagged two; Will Davidge hasn't had a bite, and I'm afraid he's bored to death."

"Poor fellow," she exclaimed, "that's hard luck!" After her next catch she changed her fly and started down stream. Coming up to Will, who was lying on his back on the ground, she said: "How are you getting along, Mr. Davidge?"

"Haven't caught a thing," he replied.

"Guess I wasn't cut out for a fisherman; or if I was, I was spoiled in the making."

"Let me examine your line," she said. She found he had three wet-flies fastened to his leader. "May I make a suggestion?" she asked.

"Do, please, I beg of you; anything to extricate me from this state of utter annihilation."

She removed the useless bait and replaced it with one of her tiny dry-flies. "Now," she said, "suppose we move a little further down the stream. I think we can find a better spot. Miss Mary, will you go along?"

"I shall be delighted to," replied Mary, who was on the opposite bank. "I am satisfied that we are not in the right place here." Opening her basket, she held up two little trout, and dolefully said: "That's the fruit of my morning's labor."

They walked along for perhaps a hundred and fifty yards, till they came to a point where the stream widened several feet, with a deep pool, and then became narrow again and shallow, so that the water ran rapidly with a babbling sound over the rocks and fell ten or twelve inches into a basin below.

"Let us see what there is here," said Miss Catherine. And standing back, she cast her fly so that it fell on the water a few feet above the fall. Within a minute the fly disappeared and a flash of light was reflected as a graceful little shiner was bowled over. Catherine had him in her hand in a moment. Will was electrified, and Miss Mary watched the operation from the opposite side with great interest.

"Now try your hand at it," said Catherine. He had watched her movements closely, and swinging the rod over his head, he cast his fly neatly, so that it fell at nearly the same point she had struck. He watched it for a moment; but hearing some exclamation from Miss Mary, he turned and looked in the direction to which she was pointing.

"Mr. Davidge, Mr. Davidge!" exclaimed Catherine; and at the same moment he felt his rod bending forward. Collecting his wits in an instant, he jerked his line with such a force that the fish that was running off with his hook was thrown several feet in the air, but in the slacking of the line was released, and fell back into the water.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Did you

ever see such stupid bungling in your life? I've a great mind to take a header in the same direction that pesky little fish has gone."

Mary Trumbull turned her face away, convulsed with laughter.

"Why, no," said Catherine in a compassionate voice. "I don't think it was stupid at all. That's an accident that is likely to happen to any of us. One needs to remember that eternal vigilance is the price of a good catch. Your cast was excellent. Watch your line, and the moment you see the rise, give it a gentle jerk, which will keep your line taut without straining it and land your game where you want it. Do, please, try again."

He gazed at his fair mentor for a moment with a look of pleasant surprise, and seeing that she spoke with the utmost sincerity, he said: "Thank you, Miss Sidney; I will follow your suggestions, and if I don't bag the next fish that dares to nibble at my bait, I'll commit *hara-kiri* on the spot."

She smiled as she examined his fly. "It is all right," she said. And again he made a skilful cast, and this time watched with strained attention the end of his line. He

had not long to wait. A pretty rise caught the fly, and away went the line. Following precisely her suggestions, he landed as fine a specimen as had been taken from the brook that morning. He was as proud and delighted over his success as a boy with his first drum.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "isn't he a beauty?" There was no more enthusiastic angler in the party from Oakhurst, for the rest of the day, than Will Davidge. The fever had caught him — and in his case it became chronic.

In the meantime Miss Catherine found her way to the other side of the stream and offered her assistance to Miss Mary. The latter had listened and observed attentively, while Miss Catherine was initiating Will Davidge into the mysteries of the piscatorial art, and had profited by her observations. Catherine, however, selected a different fly from her wallet — an expert will be guided in his selection by the season as well as by the condition of the water — gave her some excellent object lessons in the intricate movements of fly-casting, and some cautionary suggestions as to landing her catch safely.

While this interesting little episode was

going on, Fred approached and became at once an attentive listener. As he stood there, his attention was suddenly attracted to the opposite side, where Will Davidge — too completely absorbed in his work to notice Fred's approach — was artistically landing a good-sized finny.

"Bravo, my boy, bravo!" shouted Fred. "Looks as though you were having pretty good luck, Will."

"I've taken three within the last fifteen minutes," replied Davidge — without intimating that the said three constituted his entire catch.

Turning to Miss Catherine, Fred said: "I am going up to see whether Agnes' 'rations' have arrived. They were to be here about this time." As he spoke, the expression of his face clearly indicated that his remark was intended to convey an invitation.

"Can I be of any assistance?" she asked.

"I am very sure you can," he replied; and they started off together. The "rations" had arrived, and Agnes was directing the transportation of the hampers, baskets, buckets, etc., by the butler and two maids, to a spot which she had selected on the hillside, under

a great spreading oak. The outfit included a supply of camp chairs, round, three-legged camp tables, table linen, water coolers, spirit lamps, and a bountiful supply of delicious edibles; with tea, coffee, chocolate, claret, champagne, and brandy.

Agnes and Catherine rolled up their sleeves and went to work. Fred followed suit, and although he tipped a table over and broke two or three plates — which caused Agnes to laugh and tell him that he was too awkward for anything — he did good service. When everything was in readiness and the rest of the party were summoned, "the camp," as Agnes called it, presented a very attractive appearance, and the young hostess was the recipient of many gracious compliments. Of course everybody had a ravenous appetite and everybody seemed to find just what he or she liked best to eat and drink. The conversation was animated and the fun and laughter of the heartiest, merriest kind. Yet with it all there was, invariably, that exquisite urbanity and courtesy which characterize true refinement.

"Ladies, may we smoke?" asked Fred, producing a box of Perfectos.

"I suppose," said Agnes, turning to the ladies, "this species of self-indulgence is necessary for their amiability."

"I am sure it is very pardonable," said Miss Catherine. "Indeed I am quite inclined to envy them the satisfaction they find in it."

"My pastor assures me," said Will Davidge, "that it is better to smoke here than hereafter."

"Are you quite sure he is orthodox?" asked Agnes.

"Well, I never sounded him on his theological views, Miss Drayton; but he uses the weed himself, and I have never heard him prevaricate."

"You are quite safe, I have no doubt, in following his example," said Agnes. "But, gentlemen, please don't forget that there are still as good fishes in the brook as ever yet were caught."

Fishing, however, in the afternoon was not resumed with quite as much zest as it had been taken up in the morning. Nevertheless several good catches were made.

"Miss Catherine," said Fred, after finishing his second cigar, "Dr. Eaton tells me that

your fly-casting is ideal. May I have the pleasure of escorting you to the field of action and watching your mode of attack?"

"Dr. Eaton is a past master, not only of fly-fishing, but of complimentary speeches," replied Miss Catherine. "I shall be delighted to take a few lessons from you, Mr. Drayton, and I have no doubt I shall be able to learn a great deal, as I certainly did from watching the doctor's skilful handling of the rod this morning. But please don't anticipate any ideals in my work. You will be disappointed if you do, and then I should be mortified."

"Humility, thy name is Catherine," exclaimed the doctor.

"Mrs. Eaton, will you please call your husband to order?" said Miss Catherine. "Does he often indulge in these flights of imagination?"

"The doctor sometimes underestimates the value of a good thing," replied his wife, "but I never knew him to err in a diagnosis."

"Why, I believe you are both conspiring against me. Come, Mr. Drayton," she said, picking up her rod, "let us fly from these dangerous precincts." And off they went,

laughing as they turned a parting look to their admiring friends.

They proceeded up the stream, passing the spot which Catherine had selected in the morning, and followed the watercourse into the woods, until they came to an opening, or clear space, where the great high trees on the easterly side stretched back thirty or forty feet and allowed the green grass and wild flowers to revel in a sort of oasis for a few rods up and down the waterway. There were pools in the brook and two or three little falls, or cascades, within this open space.

"*Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam, circumspice*," said Fred.

"Eureka," she replied.

The brook at this point was shaded from the western sun by the tall forest trees, which on that side grew to within a few feet of the water's edge, but were not dense enough to prevent the rays of sunlight from flashing through here and there and dancing over the waters of the winding stream and the green grass and daisies of the adjoining field.

If one were seeking a peaceful retreat, alfresco, a quiet nook for reading or study

or day-dream indulgence, he would find this charming spot a very sanctuary of nature. Here the two young anglers, fascinated by the natural beauty which surrounded them and by the delightful sport in which they were engaged — still more by the consciousness of each other's presence — spent the pleasantest hour of their day's outing. Fred insisted upon helping Catherine to take from the hook every fish she caught. Then he must needs hold her hand just long enough to admire with her the speckled beauty which it held. And of course at each recurrence of the little episode one or the other would exclaim, with the most charming naïveté: "Isn't he a perfect beauty!" And then, quite naturally, they would look up into each other's eyes and smile. Ah! how many tales of love are told by those half-unconscious looks, while the lips utter naught but the merest commonplace! Who would have it otherwise?

O, there's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream!

Agnes' voice, pitched in a high key — "F–r–e–d, F–r–e–d" — recalled these young

people to an abrupt realization of the fact that they were still inhabitants of this mundane sphere and that there were others.

The carriages were waiting; the day's catch was turned over to Stephen's care and at once packed in ice; the same order was observed in returning as in coming, and in less than an hour they were all at Oakhurst, resting in their apartments or preparing for the evening.

When they met again at the dinner table, everybody had a chapter to contribute to the story of the day's doings, and an accurate account was taken of individual assets; that is, of the results of each one's efforts. After all reports were in, Agnes announced that the day's catch amounted to one hundred and seventeen — an average of about fifteen for each of the party — which was declared to be a very satisfactory showing.

All were tired; but Miss Catherine entertained them for a half hour or more with selections from the opera and from Mendelssohn's "Songs," Fred standing near her at the piano all the time and turning the pages of her music. The others sat out on the veranda, much to his satisfaction, as it per-

mitted him to express more earnestly his admiration of her playing.

They bade each other an early "good-night," and by ten o'clock all were in their rooms. When Catherine found herself alone, instead of preparing for bed, she dropped into a chair in the corner and began to think over the events of the past two days and to analyze the situation. After a long conference with herself, she reached a conclusion — it would seem, perhaps, a little paradoxical — which she enunciated solemnly to her other self in something like this language: "Catherine Sidney, this affair has gone far enough — quite too far, in fact. It must stop right here and now. You must certainly realize that the obstacles are simply insurmountable." And leaning her head to one side, on the cushion of her chair, she sighed and looked anxious.

"Oh dear! I wonder where father and mother are and what they are doing to-night," she said to herself. She was tired, as well as worried, and rousing herself with an effort, she hurriedly prepared for the night.

XXVII

Sunday in the Country

AS is customary in American Protestant families, the Draytons usually indulged in a prolonged morning nap on Sundays, and breakfasted at nine o'clock. Then, faithful to the traditions that had come down to them from their New England ancestors, they tried very hard to look serious on the Sabbath Day. Amusements of all kinds were suspended, and no music was heard in the house, except an occasional attempt at psalm singing. Mrs. Drayton especially cultivated this lugubrious method of observing the Lord's Day; not only because it seemed to her thoroughly "devotional" — from her religious point of view — but also because she felt that it was "good form" to do so. There was no church within three miles of Oakhurst, and it was only on rare occasions that

the family were moved to take such a journey in order to worship in the little country church and listen to the music and oratory furnished in a provincial parish.

Mr. Drayton, as a rule, spent the best part of the day napping on the lounge in the library, with his newspaper over his face. Fred took Sunday to inspect the stables and talk conditions over with the men. When the weather was fine, he and Agnes spent a good part of the day on the borders of the Little Lake, comparing notes and formulating their plans.

Louis sometimes revolted against the oppression of this doleful Sunday atmosphere and would steal away down to the little village of Chappaqua, just to see "people moving," as he said. There was a story told at Oakhurst that when Louis was a little fellow, about six years old, his good mother was trying one day to describe to him the abode of the blessed and that of the condemned in the future life. The former she had pictured to him as one continuous Sabbath Day, where the good people spend most of their time singing Sunday-school hymns. She was shocked, at the conclusion of her dissertation,

by his asking very innocently: "Mamma, when we get there, can I go down sometimes, Saturday afternoon, to hell, to play?"

Dr. Eaton had inquired as to the nearest Catholic church, and when Fred told him there was nothing nearer than Pleasantville — which meant a smart drive of nearly an hour — he hesitated a little.

"No reason why you shouldn't go," said Fred. "The horses have nothing else to do."

"Well, if the weather is fine to-morrow, Mrs. Eaton, Miss Catherine, and I would like to ride over to assist at Mass."

"Certainly, doctor. I will see that the carriage is ready for you at half-past nine. I presume that will be early enough for you to reach the church in season for divine service."

"I presume," said the doctor, "that Mass begins at half-past ten."

Fred was silent for a few moments, as he continued tapping the ashes from his cigar. He evidently had something on his mind that he wanted to say. The doctor noticed it and, as usual, waited quietly for his friend to speak.

"Doctor, is there any reason why I shouldn't go with you to your church to-morrow?"

"Not the slightest, my dear boy," replied the doctor. "We shall be delighted to have you go along with us. But let me remind you that you must not expect to meet at our churches the same sort of people that you meet at the opera or at Mrs. Barclay's receptions. It is no place to study the fashions, or, in fact, to gratify any of one's social tastes. We have something quite different in view when we kneel before our altars."

"Well, doctor, I think, if none of you object, I will make one of the party to Pleasantville to-morrow."

"I am sure I can speak for all," replied the doctor. "It will give us great pleasure to have you with us."

No one else knew of Fred's intention, and so when the carriage drove to the door at half-past nine Sunday morning, and the ladies took their seats, followed by the doctor, the others were surprised to see Fred jump in and take the vacant seat at the doctor's side. Agnes clapped her hands and laughed. Will Davidge, who stood on the veranda steps,

with his hands in his pockets, called out to Fred:

"The Devil was sick — the Devil a monk would be ;
The Devil was well — the Devil a monk was he."

Fred good-humoredly waved his hand in reply, and they were off.

They arrived at church some minutes before Mass began and were shown to a pew about halfway up the centre aisle. Mrs. Eaton entered first, Miss Catherine followed her, and Fred sat between the latter and Dr. Eaton, who took the end seat. After kneeling a few moments in prayer, they had time, before the services began, to make a little study of the church and of the congregation which was rapidly filling the pews.

It was a small brick building, with plain glass windows; the altar built of wood, but in excellent taste, both as to the structure and the ornamentation upon it. The tabernacle was especially attractive, and under the canopy which surmounted it, was a large brass crucifix. Fresh cut flowers were placed on either side and, as usual, there were six large candlesticks. At the right and left of the high altar, within the chancel, were the altars

of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph; a marble statue of the Mother of God on the former, and that of the foster father of the Redeemer on the latter. The pews and kneeling benches were exceedingly plain, evidently not constructed with a view to luxurious comfort. A small organ loft in the rear suggested a possible musical programme.

A few well-to-do, rather *distingué* looking ladies and gentlemen walked up the aisle and took front seats; but the great majority of the congregation were evidently "working people"—farmers, tradesmen, mechanics, and servants.

Presently the candles were lit upon the high altar, and a few minutes later a priest, in sacerdotal robes, entered from the sacristy, preceded by six altar boys.

Dr. Eaton had brought with him an extra *vade mecum*. Opening the little book and turning to "Devotions at Mass," he handed it to Fred. "You will find there an explanation of everything that takes place in the sanctuary," he said.

Fred examined the page before him, and following the description given there of the movements of the celebrant, read the *Introibo*

ad altare Dei, the psalm, *Judica me, Deus*, the *Confiteor*, and then, after the priest had ascended to the altar, the *Kyrie eleison* and the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. Even if the English version were not there — as indeed it always is, on the same page with the Latin prayers — Fred would have had no trouble in following the Mass. He was greatly impressed by the beauty of many of the prayers, especially at the Offertory, the *Suscipe, sancte Pater, omnipotens, aeterne Deus, hanc immaculatam Hostiam*, and the *Offerimus Tibi, Domine, calicem salutaris*. And when, at the moment of consecration, the heads of all were bowed, amid the most profound silence, and the solemn words of consecration were pronounced by the priest, Hoc Est Enim Corpus Meum, Fred not only knelt, but bowed his head and closed his eyes, and in his heart he uttered a fervent prayer: "O my God, if Thou art really and truly present before me on the altar, make Thyself known to me, I beseech Thee, and bring me to a knowledge of the true faith." He remained for a considerable time in this posture, until he heard the priest reciting aloud the *Pater Noster*. Catherine, who knelt near him, was

conscious intuitively of Fred's devotional attitude, and prayed earnestly for him.

After the Communion a venerable priest entered the sanctuary from the sacristy, and after making the "announcements" read the Gospel and gave a brief instruction thereon. It was the Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi, the Gospel of which feast is taken from John vi. 56–59:

> At that time, Jesus said to the multitudes of the Jews: "My Flesh is true food, and My Blood is true drink. He who eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the Father who liveth, sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread which came down from heaven. Not as your fathers ate the manna and died. He who eateth this Bread, shall live forever."

His sermon was upon the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar — a truth inculcated by the words of Our Lord in the Gospel just read, and accepted by the Christian Church everywhere, from the time of Christ to the present day — the pivotal dogma, as it were, around which centre all the great truths of Christianity. The reverend gentleman's remarks were

delivered without any effort at oratorical effect; there was an entire absence of studied phrases; the language was simple and direct, his eloquence was that of the heart.

Fred scarcely took his eyes from the speaker during the sermon — a fact which did not escape Catherine's attention. When he concluded, the officiating priest ascended the altar again and finished Mass in a few minutes. The psalm, *Laudate Dominum*, was sung during the reading of the last Gospel, and the congregation filed out of church.

As the Oakhurst party drove off, Dr. Eaton turned to his companion and said: "Well, Fred, how were you impressed?"

"Never more impressed in my life by any religious ceremony," he replied. "I'm going again."

Catherine raised her soft brown eyes and turned upon him a look of tenderness which she had never before shown. His head was bent downward and he did not see it. She at once lowered her eyes and fumbled with the button of her glove, as though it were absorbing her attention.

"Glad to hear you say so, Fred," said the doctor. "If you will go on a little further,

as I did a few years ago, you will find there are a good many things in the Catholic Church of which you have not dreamed.

"Thousands of good people, Fred, upon whom the truth and beauty of Mother Church have begun to dawn, have been turned back and blinded to the kindly light that was leading them on, and persuaded to close their eyes and ears to the evidences springing up around them, by a few hidebound bigots who have no eyes to see or ears to hear beyond the pale of their own narrow but constantly shifting creed."

"Alfred, you are using rather strong language," said Mrs. Eaton.

"Yes, Anna, I know I am," he replied. "But it is a matter in which I feel very strongly. My experience, our experience, that of several of our friends under like circumstances, has demonstrated the fact that, whenever any fair-minded person seeking the truth is led to examine the claims of the Catholic Church, he is met by obstacles that he finds in no other field of inquiry. People whose knowledge of the history, the teaching, and the spirit of the Church is tinged throughout with the prejudices they have inherited, and who seem always ready to *accept without*

investigation the calumnies uttered by irresponsible writers or speakers, these people will *earnestly caution* the religious inquirer against what they are pleased to term 'the superstition and corruption of the Romish Church.' It is positively a phenomenon which I have never been able to understand how so many intelligent, well-educated, and apparently fair-minded people are in such dense ignorance of the truth in these matters, and, moreover, are seemingly so unwilling to investigate the truth."

"Inherited prejudices, no doubt, are very hard to overcome," replied Fred; "and of course one's early training is apt to color his views or impressions in after-life."

"I can't help thinking," said Miss Catherine, "that these good people, who, it is true, sometimes make themselves very officious and, as you say, are unpardonably ignorant and prejudiced — bigoted, if you will — are nevertheless generally prompted by good motives. As Mr. Drayton says, it is very hard for them to escape from the prejudices they have inherited or imbibed with their early training."

"That is certainly a most charitable way

to look at it," replied the doctor. "I frequently try to persuade myself that, as you suggest, the mischief is the result of invincible ignorance, rather than sinister motives. But when I see men who are leaders of the people — in the pulpit as well as the press — whose education and opportunities should make them know better, whose vocation should be to preach the gospel of peace and Christian charity, to inculcate right thinking and good citizenship — when I see them launching their polemics, week after week, against the ancient Church, rehashing infamous old calumnies that have been refuted over and over again, and ascribing to her doctrines and practices that are utterly foreign to her, it is a tax upon my charity as well as my credulity to suppose that their motives are wholly altruistic; and I realize, too, the difficulties that confront the seeker after religious truth. These things sometimes bring to my mind the words of our Divine Lord, 'If the world hate you, know that it has hated me before you,' and those other words of our Redeemer, 'The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor knoweth him!'"

"Well, I know I have a great deal to learn," said Fred, "and I hope I shall be open-minded enough to see every side of a question. If there is anything in language that would bring conviction to my mind and religious sentiment to my heart, it is the straightforward, honest reasoning and the fervent appeals of the reverend gentleman who preached that brief little sermon to us this morning."

Catherine had been looking out upon the beautiful country through which they were passing, while Fred was speaking. She did not trust herself to look at him.

He continued: "I confess, however, that I cannot comprehend some of your doctrines, and it would require, doctor, a great deal of forceful argument to convince me that they are sound."

Catherine seemed to be straining her eyes to see something in the far distance, and there was a slight flush on her cheeks.

"I respect your views, Fred, and understand them perfectly," replied the doctor. "I have held precisely the same opinions that you do, and I know how difficult it is, after years of more or less settled convictions, to

abandon one position after another, even when compelled to by the forceful arguments you speak of. I am not, however, alleging reasons, now, in defence of my own religious convictions. I am criticising the hostility shown to anything like fair, reasonable inquiry into these matters. If you propose to study the history of Germany or France or England, you will be advised to consult the works of a German historian or a Frenchman or an Englishman, as the case may be. You will hardly expect to acquire very accurate knowledge of the history and civilization of a country from the writings of one of its enemies, although his work might furnish interesting reading. But if accurate knowledge is sought of the history of the Catholic Church, her teachings and practices, the inquirer will generally be referred — by the zealous sectaries I speak of — to the writings of the enemies of the Church and the defamers of her doctrines and works. This has always seemed to me irrational and cowardly."

"After all, doctor, is not faith a gift of God?" said Miss Catherine. "And do not these people, whose intellectual vision seems so clear, remain in spiritual darkness, because

they have not received the grace necessary to faith?"

"Miss Catherine, you are undoubtedly correct," replied the doctor, "and in the ultimate analysis that is the real solution of the whole question. And let me add, I believe that grace comes to any soul only through the channels of humility and prayer."

"Fred," said Mrs. Eaton, "isn't that your house that we see through the trees, on the right?"

He was glad of an opportunity to turn around. "That's dear old Oakhurst," he replied.

"How lovely it looks," she said, "perched up there on the little hill."

The doctor realized that his wife was making an effort to divert the conversation from controversial subjects, and he at once seconded her efforts. "This is one of the most charming countries I have ever seen," he remarked. "The scenery in all directions is exquisitely beautiful, the roads are fine, and the air is exhilarating."

"And the fishing is superb," added Miss Catherine.

"Ah! truly," said the doctor, "the fishing

has proved the *Ultima Thule* of my sportive ambition."

And so they chatted pleasantly of the country and its many attractions, until the carriage stopped at the front door of Oakhurst.

Catherine made her way as quickly as possible to her room, and throwing off her light wraps, sat down in a rocking-chair as though she was completely exhausted. Her early morning ride to church had been delightful; she had enjoyed the services; and Fred's earnest, recollected manner during Mass and throughout the sermon had given her a great deal of happiness. But the conversation on the way home — at least that part of it in which he had declared his difficulty in accepting some of the doctrines of the Church — had been painful to her, and now she felt distracted.

XXVIII

Cupid's Work

WHILE Catherine was sitting thus listlessly in her room, she was aroused by a knock at the door. Upon her calling out, "Come in," one of the maids entered and handed her a letter, which she said had just arrived in the Sunday morning mail. It read as follows:

MY DEAR MISS SIDNEY, — You asked me, when you went away, to keep you informed of any change in Margaret Allen's condition. I regret to tell you that she has had another relapse, and her condition, the doctor says, is quite critical. I called there to-day and found her dear mother in a very distressed state of mind. Poor woman, what will she do, if that idolized daughter is taken from her? Mrs. Allen says that Margaret calls constantly for you, and wants to know when you are coming back. On my way home I stopped and saw Father Griffin. He promised to call at once upon Margaret, and do all that he could for her. Sincerely your friend,

CHARLOTTE MANNING

Catherine's resolution was taken at once to return to the city as quickly as possible; and having so resolved, she ran downstairs to announce her intention and to inquire about the trains. Dr. Eaton and Fred were chatting together on the front piazza. She told them of the news she had received, and added that she ought to return home as quickly as possible.

"There is only one train to-night that you could catch, Miss Catherine," said Fred, "and that is a miserable one. But there is an early express in the morning, that gets you into the city about half-past nine. We can arrange to have you meet that train, if you feel that you must go."

"I must indeed," she replied, "and I will be ready to start as early as may be necessary."

"Mrs. Eaton and I were planning to return to-morrow afternoon," said the doctor. "If you decide to take a morning train, we will go down with you. If Miss Allen's condition is critical, as would seem to be the case, I feel that I ought to return and see her. My assistant, Dr. Ennis, I know, would do everything possible for her relief and comfort; but I am sure she will expect to see me."

The announcement that the Eatons and Miss Catherine Sidney were going to leave in the morning had a depressing effect upon the whole party, which was reflected in the conversation at dinner and during the afternoon. Agnes monopolized as much of Catherine's society as she could — they had become very fond of one another — and had exacted from her a promise that she would visit Oakhurst again soon. Fred was a little annoyed at Agnes for taking Catherine away and keeping her, as she did, most of the afternoon in her own room; and he was not entirely without a feeling of resentment that Miss Catherine should be willing to absent herself for so long a time from the society of — the others. He determined to manage it in some way so that he should see more of her and have her, if possible, to himself during the evening.

As they were leaving the dining-room, therefore, after a late tea, on their way to the veranda, Fred approached her and said: "Miss Catherine, what do you say to a little stroll about the grounds?"

"I shall be delighted, Mr. Drayton," she replied. She had really been hoping for

such an invitation, for she felt somehow that she must see and talk with him again before returning to New York.

They first visited the garden, fragrant with the sweet evening perfume of the flowers. Selecting a little bunch of the choicest pansies, he handed them to her and said: "Miss Catherine, this is my favorite flower. Will you wear these to-night for me?" And he pressed them to his lips before giving them to her.

"I will, indeed," she replied, attaching them at once to her waist; "and whenever hereafter I see a beautiful pansy, I will think of dear old Oakhurst."

"And of one — that is, of those to whom your too brief visit has given so much pleasure," he added.

"Oh yes, yes, indeed," she replied, speaking hastily and somewhat nervously. "I shall never forget the kindness you have all shown me here. Agnes and I have become very warm friends, and I hope we are going to see a great deal of each other. She is a sweet, lovely girl."

"I am sure she more than reciprocates your admiration and affection, Miss Cather-

ine. It would certainly be very remarkable if she did not."

"It is very kind of you to say so," replied Catherine.

They passed out of the garden by the southern gate, skirted the oval, and walked towards the Little Lake. The fast fading tints of a beautiful sunset were disappearing, the twilight that had lighted their way through the garden had become a weird gloaming, and the moon was asserting her right to show the way to mortals treading this terrestrial sphere. As Fred and Catherine approached the lake, the scene was enchanting. No sound was heard, save the croaking of the frogs, the ceaseless chirping of the tree crickets, and occasionally, in the distance, the note of the whip-poor-wills. The light of the moon, intercepted here and there by the tall trees on the banks of the Little Lake, cast a silvery sheen upon the waters, broken by shadows which assumed the most variegated shapes and seemed to reflect the forms of threatening monsters.

The boathouse and pier at the southern side of the lake was reached by a series of marble steps, and halfway down the little

descent a pretty terrace stretched out on either side, with rustic seats, from which a good view was afforded of the water and the surrounding country. It was a favorite resort of Fred when he was in a contemplative mood, and he and Agnes had spent many pleasant hours there together.

And here now Fred invited Catherine to sit down and rest. The soft light of the moon, the exquisitely beautiful scene below, and all around them, the light and shadows on the water and the lawns, the stillness of the night, interrupted only by the sweet sounds of animate nature and the consciousness that they were here in this lovely retreat, alone together, all this conspired to awaken in the hearts of these young people whatever of romance their natures were capable of.

Fred questioned Catherine as to what she was looking forward to on her return to the city; how her days and evenings were to be spent; whom she expected to meet; what books she would read, etc. She spoke frankly and described without hesitation her duties as governess at Mrs. Ewing's, and referred briefly to her religious and charity work; though of the latter he knew that she was

accomplishing far more than she was willing to speak of.

After a little silence Fred suddenly turned to her and said: "Miss Catherine, at the risk of violating the etiquette of hospitality, I feel that I must say something to you before you leave Oakhurst."

She started, drew back a little, and looked at him nervously. She shrank from hearing what she knew he was going to say. Her heart was open, yes, secretly yearned, for words that could only be sweet to her ears. But within her soul there was a silent, never-failing monitor that told her *she must not listen;* and at that moment she sincerely wished that she could exert some influence over her friend that would cause him at least to postpone an utterance which she longed to hear, yet to which she must turn a deaf ear.

"Pardon me, I pray you, Miss Catherine, for saying what my heart compels me to. I love you tenderly."

She sprang to her feet. "Stop, stop, Mr. Drayton," she exclaimed. "It cannot be; you must not speak in that way to me. Please let us return to the house."

He had risen to his feet at the same moment

she did; and as she drew back, he tried to take her hand. She withdrew it. "Miss Catherine, your words pain me more than I can tell you. Why do you say, 'It cannot be'?"

"Mr. Drayton, you must not forget," she said, speaking deliberately, "that in those matters which most intimately concern one's whole being and influence one's entire life, you and I are widely apart; our religious convictions separate us. Remember, please, that I am a Roman Catholic."

"Miss Catherine, is that the only thing that separates us? Is it that alone which leads you to say, 'It cannot be'?"

She turned away for a moment, looking upwards; and the moonlight fell upon her beautiful face, so that Fred caught every expression in it. The serious, determined look which she had worn when she last spoke faded away, and a pleased expression — almost a smile — came over her face. And then, turning again to him, she replied in a low voice: "Mr. Drayton, that is an all-sufficient reason. Come, let us rejoin our friends. I am afraid they will think we have fallen into the lake," she added laughingly, as

though she would change the current of his thoughts.

As they started up the steps, he offered her his arm, and she accepted it. When they reached the top step, he turned to her and said: "Let us linger here just a moment, to take a last look before we say 'good-night' to Little Lake." And they stood there several minutes, arm in arm, admiring the indescribable beauty that stretched out before them. Neither spoke. And yet there was between them an intimate communion of souls, more sympathetic and full of meaning than could be uttered in many words. It was for them both one of those sweet, memorable moments, that come perhaps into every pure and noble life; that mark, as it were, an epoch; that exert a silent, almost unconscious influence upon many a thought and many an act in after-life, and are treasured in memory as something sacred. A thought so beautifully expressed in Tom Moore's well-known lines:

Let fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy;
Which come in the nighttime of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features which joy used to wear.

"Oh how beautiful the world is!" exclaimed Catherine.

"And how much there is in it to love," added Fred, as he pressed the hand that lay upon his arm, and looked into her face.

At that moment a merry peal of laughter startled them, and turning quickly they saw Agnes and Lieutenant Hazelton.

"You naughty runaways!" cried out Agnes. "Are you moonstruck? And are we to be deprived of the pleasure of your company all the evening? Fred, you are very selfish to keep Miss Catherine away from us so long."

"I know I am," he replied, "and I owe you all an apology; but the night is so beautiful it seemed a pity to think of going indoors." He was really quite annoyed at Agnes and the lieutenant for interrupting so ruthlessly their little tête-à-tête, but he determined not to show it.

"Is it not lovely, Agnes?" said Catherine. "Can you picture anything more fascinating than that beautiful Little Lake, with its picturesque surroundings, in the soft, silvery light of the moon?"

"No, I cannot," replied Agnes. "I love the dear spot, and though Fred calls it my

'frog pond,' it is for him, as well as for me, a favorite trysting-place. Isn't it, Freddie boy?"

"Indeed it is," he replied, "and I shall love it now more than ever."

"I should think it would be a source of great comfort and enjoyment for you all," said the lieutenant. "I wish we had something like it on Governor's Island."

"With a great big gun, I suppose, at every turn in the walk, and huge piles of cannon-balls in every direction," suggested Agnes.

"No," replied the lieutenant, "I think I would prefer a bronze statue of Dolly, with her peerless rider."

"Followed, of course, by Prince, with Brocton Brook as a background," she added, laughing heartily.

"Now, Miss Agnes," said the lieutenant, "that is certainly a very cruel thrust! *Tantaene animis coelestibus irae!*"

"Mr. Drayton," said Miss Catherine, "there is evidently some mystery in this conversation. Can you unravel it?"

"Oh yes," interposed Agnes. "Thereon hangs a tale, which some day I may unfold to you; that is, unless Lieutenant Hazelton is always on his good behavior."

"Miss Agnes," said the lieutenant, "you certainly hold my secret in your keeping, and I am completely at your mercy. I hope you will deal leniently with me."

"Why, how intensely interesting this is becoming," said Catherine. "Some deep-laid plot, I am sure, will yet be revealed."

"Miss Catherine," replied Agnes very solemnly, "the revelation of this terrible mystery depends entirely upon the continued good conduct of the culprit before you. If ever again he dare to speak flippantly of Dolly, woe betide him!" And pointing her finger at the lieutenant, she laughed at his discomfiture.

"Who comes there?" cried Fred, as he heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

"Friend with the countersign," replied Will Davidge, as he appeared with Miss Mary Trumbull on the wooded path at their left.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign," said Fred.

"*Tempus fugit*," cried out Davidge.

"What news from headquarters, good friends?" asked Fred.

"Agnes Drayton," said Miss Mary, "you and the lieutenant were delegated to dis-

cover the whereabouts of the deserters and bring them back to camp. Your prolonged absence has created a suspicion that you too are fugitives, and Mr. Davidge and I have been ordered to arrest you all."

"Well, whatever comes out of this little escapade," said the lieutenant, "it is very evident that you are all quite proficient in military tactics. I could not have learned as much in an hour's lecture from the colonel as I have here to-night in five minutes."

"Lieutenant, I think, if you will lead the column, perhaps we had better march back to headquarters," suggested Fred, "and make our peace with the powers that be."

"Ah! Miss Mary," called out Dr. Eaton, as they walked up the steps of the front piazza, "you have rounded up all the stragglers, have you?"

"All present or accounted for, doctor," she replied. "What shall be their punishment?"

"I think," said the doctor, "that Miss Catherine is the real cause of the scattering of our forces to-night, and her penalty therefor shall be a piano recital forthwith."

"I bow to your decision, doctor, and think

you are very lenient in the punishment you inflict. What shall it be to-night?"

"Something," he replied, "from the 'Stabat Mater.'" Accompanied by Fred, she went to the piano and played, with much feeling, Rossini's "Cujus Animam." She followed it with Gounod's "Ave Maria," and then played a nocturne of Chopin which Fred had heard her play before and admired very much.

How often it happens that the piano serves as a convenient rendezvous for young people who are seeking each other's society, and are far more interested in the delightful little tête-à-têtes the occasion affords than in the music which seemingly brings them together. Fred and Catherine were still conversing — apparently fumbling over the music, open before them — when the others entered the parlor to say "good-night."

Agnes had announced a half-past seven breakfast in the morning for the convenience of those who were to take an early train, and the party therefore broke up somewhat earlier than usual. After the others had gone, Fred escorted Catherine to the foot of the stairs. They lingered in the hall for a moment, loath to part; and as finally they

said "good-night" to each other, Fred took her hand and kissed it — for the first time. Whatever effect her words may have had upon him, when earlier in the evening she had refused to listen to his declaration of love, the look which she gave him, as their eyes met at their parting that night, filled his soul with unspeakable happiness. It revealed to him a love which she sought by her words to conceal.

When Catherine reached her room, she began to bustle about nervously, making her preparations for departure in the morning. Usually very careful and systematic in arranging her clothing and personal effects, and quite skilful in packing, to-night, somehow, things were constantly getting tangled up and mixed in a most exasperating way. Evidently her thoughts were somewhere else, and she concluded, at length, that she had better sit down, think it over, and try to collect herself.

She realized that a tremendous conflict was going on between her heart and her conscience. Her heart was full of happiness — that sweet happiness which comes to a woman when she is assured that she is sincerely loved by the man who has won her heart. But peace of

mind she did not enjoy. Her conscience told her she must not yield so blindly to the sweet emotions that were possessing her soul. That inner monitor cried out to her in a voice that would not be silenced, and it said: "Which now shall triumph, love or duty?" Her face gathered gradually a stern expression, she closed her eyes, and clutching her fingers tightly in her hands, she said aloud to herself: "Catherine Sidney, thus far and no farther. No! I — will — not. I will never give my heart to a man who will not lay his heart with mine on the altar and dwell with me always in the sweet Sacred Heart of our dear Lord." And falling on her knees and covering her face with her hands, she lifted her soul to God and said aloud: "My Heavenly Father, I beseech Thee, give me the light to know and the grace to do Thy holy will in all things. Thy will be done."

As she rose suddenly from her knees and started towards the bureau, she knocked over a chair, making a loud noise as it struck the floor. A moment later there was a gentle tap at the door.

XXIX

Confidential

AGNES entered in her dressing-gown. "I heard a noise," she said, "and knew you must be up. I am so glad you haven't gone to bed; I have something I must tell you." And taking both of her hands, she led her to the sofa.

"Catherine, I have a great secret to tell you. Promise me that you will keep it sacredly."

Catherine put her arms about her, and kissing her affectionately, said: "Agnes dear, I think you may trust me."

Agnes looked into her face for a moment with a confiding but abashed expression, and then in a loud whisper said: "Lieutenant Hazelton has proposed to me to-night." And throwing her head upon Catherine's shoulder, she burst out laughing, as though she thought it all the funniest thing imaginable.

Catherine smiled, as she caressed her friend tenderly. "May I ask what happened then, my dear? What did you reply?"

"Why, I just laughed at him and told him he was crazy."

"And do you really think so?"

"Oh no, of course I don't think so; I just spoke in fun. I suppose I was so startled, or goosified, or something, that I didn't know what to say. I threw the flowers I held in my hand at him, and ran away."

"When and where did this happen, Agnes?"

"On the oval near the fountain, about ten minutes before we came upon you and Fred at the Little Lake." She smiled and threw her arms again about Catherine in a nervous way, which convinced the latter that her friend was stirred by some deeper feeling than mere humor.

"Tell me, Agnes dear, frankly: do you love Lieutenant Hazelton?" And she watched closely to see what effect her words would have.

Agnes drew back a little; a serious look came over her face, as she cast her eyes downward, and playing with the tassels of her gown she said presently: "I don't know — I like him — somehow I feel differently

towards him than towards any man I have ever met — that's all I know."

"Do your father and mother—and brother — like him?"

"Oh yes, I think they all have a very good opinion of Lieutenant Hazelton; and the Trumbulls think he is a paragon of perfection. Of course I shall tell Fred what happened to-night, as soon as I get a chance. We always confide everything to each other."

"Everything?" said Catherine, looking a little startled.

"Certainly," replied Agnes. "We never have any secrets that we can't tell one another."

"How very nice," remarked her friend in a low voice; and she looked thoughtful for a moment.

"What would you do? Have you ever had such an experience, Catherine?"

Her cheeks flushed and there was an expression of pain in her face as Agnes looked up.

"Pardon me, Catherine dear," she said, seizing her hand. "That was a very thoughtless question. I did not mean to pry into your past life. What I meant to ask was, what would you do if some one whom you — well — liked very much — to whom your heart

forbade you to say 'no,' and yet to whom for some strange reason you were unprepared to say 'yes'; if such a one should suddenly say to you, 'Catherine, I love you'; what would you say or do?"

The flush upon her cheeks deepened; the pained expression in her face became one of unmistakable distress, and as Agnes concluded her question, Catherine's countenance not only revealed her agitation, but there was in it a look of searching inquiry. Agnes was frightened as she looked up and saw it, conscious that she had unwittingly grieved her friend.

"My dear, sweet Catherine," she exclaimed, "I have wounded you. Forgive me, I beg of you. You certainly know that I could not intentionally say anything to grieve you. I fear I am a little agitated myself to-night and have spoken thoughtlessly."

Catherine caught her in her arms, and drawing her closely to her heart, kissed her affectionately. "No, dear Agnes, no," she said, "you have not wounded me. Your heart is too kind, I know, to do that. It was but a passing memory that stirred me. I love you tenderly, dear friend, and it is a very

sweet thought to me that my dear Agnes loves me."

They remained for some moments in silence, locked in each other's arms.

"You have asked me, Agnes, what I would do if I were in your place. I think I should defer any positive answer until I was quite sure of my own feelings. If Lieutenant Hazelton is worthy of you, he will be constant in his love and will not urge you to any hasty decision. In the meantime the views of your good parents and brother will have, I am sure, great weight with you."

Agnes smiled as she rose from the sofa. "Thank you, Catherine dear, thank you a thousand times. You have made me very happy. Good-night. And are you sure that you have quite forgiven me for the pain I unconsciously caused you?"

"Oh you sweet little thing!" replied Catherine. "It is I that should ask your forgiveness. Good-night, and God bless you."

XXX

Speed the Parting Guest

"'A SOUTHERLY wind and a cloudy sky proclaim it a hunting morning,'" said Dr. Eaton, as he made his appearance on the veranda a few minutes after seven Monday morning. Mr. Drayton and Will Davidge had preceded him there. "Looks like we were going to have a little rain."

"I am happy to say it does," replied Mr. Drayton. "We need rain badly; haven't had a drop for two weeks."

"Then you must welcome the easterly wind and lowering skies," continued the doctor. "It often occurs to me that we people who are pent up between brick walls in the city, and feel distressed whenever the sun goes behind a cloud, fail to appreciate the blessing of a good hard downpour of rain. The trouble is, we are selfish, and the horizon of

our vision is circumscribed by our own little world."

"Bad time to moralize, doctor — before breakfast," said Will Davidge. "An empty stomach is sterile soil in which to plant the seeds of great truths. I fully agree with you that the denizens of the metropolis do not fitly appreciate the advantage to vegetation of a wet season. But I have never understood, either, that models of altruism were to be found in the 'hayseeds' that congregate in barns and country stores and discuss the prospects of the crops. Perhaps you might say, so to speak, that circumstances alter cases. Depends, as it were, upon what you want most."

"My dear Mr. Davidge," replied the doctor, "your remarks compel me to admit the force of your first statement, that an empty stomach rebels against logic. But there's the breakfast bell. I am sure we all agree that that's the harbinger of good things to come."

The summons was promptly answered; everybody was in his or her place when the coffee was passed. But the conversation flagged; everybody seemed preoccupied. The

weather conditions, or the approaching farewells, or both, seemed to have a depressing influence upon all the party, and the smiles and laughter which greeted any effort at pleasantry were evidently forced. As was invariably the case in the Drayton family, everything had been anticipated; there was nothing to cause the least confusion or delay. The carriage was at the door promptly at eight o'clock and the trunks had gone on in advance.

The painful farewell was said with sincere hope that all might meet again soon, and many delightful little compliments were exchanged. Fred had determined at the last moment that he would return to the city with his friends, and he entered the carriage with Dr. and Mrs. Eaton and Miss Catherine.

On their arrival in New York they drove first to the Ewings' residence on Fifth Avenue, where Miss Catherine said "good-by," and then to Dr. Eaton's on Madison Avenue.

Catherine gave Mrs. Ewing a glowing account of her visit at Oakhurst and explained what it was that had brought her home so unexpectedly. Mrs. Ewing told her she had some news which she thought would be a

surprise — she hoped a pleasant one — to Catherine. Two years before, the Ewings had spent the summer at Cap à l'Aigle, on the lower St. Lawrence — at the northern extremity of Murray Bay. Mr. Ewing had just received word from his correspondent there that the same summer cottage, furnished, which they had occupied during their previous visit, could be had this year. He had telegraphed at once that he would take it from June fifteenth, and they were all busy making ready to leave New York the following week. Mrs. Ewing expected Catherine to go with them, of course, as one of the family.

A week earlier this information would have been welcome news to Catherine. She loved the country, and the suggestion of a visit to Canada was, in itself, a pleasant one. But now the thought of going away from New York for three or four months somehow aroused no enthusiasm. Indeed, for a moment she experienced a sensation of oppression, which it was a little difficult for her to conceal. Then, indignant with herself at being influenced, even for an instant, by such a selfish feeling, she exclaimed: "Why, that

will be splendid! I have always been anxious to see something of Canada, and I have understood that the country about Murray Bay is very attractive during the summer months."

"We enjoyed it greatly — the season we spent there two years ago," said Mrs. Ewing, "and I am sure you will find the change from New York an agreeable one during the heated term."

As soon as she could properly do so, Catherine hurried away to see her sick friend. The Allens lived on Thirtieth Street, a few doors from Madison Avenue. When she arrived at the house, Margaret was asleep; but she saw Mrs. Allen at once, and learned from her that Margaret's condition was critical and that Sister Winifred of the Bon Secours had been there since Friday. Catherine saw that Mrs. Allen herself was far from well; that she looked anxious and worn.

"My dear Mrs. Allen," she said, "you are tired; you are half sick yourself and need rest. Do, please, lie down and get a little sleep if you can. I will take care of everything here. Perhaps the case is not as bad as you fear. If Margaret calls or needs you, when she wakes, I will speak to you at once."

And she led the tired, heart-sick mother to her own room, got her on to the bed, smoothed her forehead gently, and sat by her side until she fell asleep. Then she went to the sick-room.

Margaret's appearance startled her as she entered. She was bolstered up on several pillows; her features, thin and emaciated, her sunken eyes, and the pallor on her face, all indicated the extremity to which the illness had reduced her. Sister Winifred, seated near the bed, was watching her attentively, and bowed quietly, without speaking, as Catherine entered. The latter looked sadly at the face of her friend for a few moments, then knelt at the bedside. While she was yet kneeling, Margaret awoke, and seeing Catherine near her, said, in a scarcely audible whisper: "Oh! my dear, sweet friend."

Catherine drew near, and bending over, took the thin, wan face in both her hands and kissed her tenderly.

"O Catherine," she whispered, "how happy I am to have you near me." And her big lustrous eyes spoke far more appealingly than her words.

"My dear Margaret," replied Catherine,

"I did not know of your severe illness, or I should have hurried home from the country before this. I cannot tell you what a privilege it is to be with you; and now I am going to stay right here, near you."

A smile lit up the emaciated face on the pillow — a face which, before her illness, had been singularly beautiful, and was still lovely in the sight of her dear friend.

"Sister Winifred," said Catherine, "you too need rest. Won't you please go into the other room and lie down for a little while? I will call if Margaret should need you."

The devoted sister was glad of the opportunity to take a little rest. She returned in about an hour, bringing Dr. Eaton with her. Noting her prostrated and restless condition, the doctor left a sedative for her and prescribed a mild tonic, which he said he would have sent around to her at once. As he left he told Sister Winifred that he would stop at St. Stephen's and ask Father Griffin to bring her the Viaticum before night, as she was liable to pass away any moment. She had been anointed Saturday.

Catherine and Sister Winifred now took turns in the sick-room, as Margaret's fitful

naps necessitated some one's being with her constantly. About the middle of the afternoon, however, she fell into a quiet, restful sleep, which lasted about an hour. When she awoke, somewhat refreshed, between four and five o'clock, she turned and said: "Catherine dear, I have something that I want to tell you." Catherine drew close to the bed, and taking her hand, looked into her face with a smile.

"Will you please open the upper right hand drawer of my bureau? At the back you will find a little package tied with white ribbon." Catherine did as she was asked, and finding the package, handed it to Margaret.

"Three years ago," said Margaret, "I was engaged to a gentleman living in Boston, whom I had known for a long time. He is the only man I ever loved — except my dear father — and Catherine, I loved him — very — very — tenderly. But he was a Protestant, and, as I learned, both from him and from his friends, bitterly opposed to our Church. Catherine, I had a long and terrible struggle with myself; but, thank God, my faith and my conscientious sense of duty triumphed in the end, and I told Harry I

could not marry him unless he became a Catholic. The result was, our engagement was broken off. I think, Catherine, that he too — was — broken-hearted." Her eyes fell on the little package, which she clutched tightly in her hand, and she was silent for a few moments. Catherine leaned over and kissed her hand affectionately. A tremendous struggle was going on in her own breast, and while her heart was moved with a tender sympathy which brought tears to her eyes, she clung to this frail, dying woman as her own guide and help and monitor.

"Margaret dear," she said, "I cannot tell you how much I admire and love you for what you tell me. But please do not tire yourself now. I fear this is too much for you."

"No, Catherine, I will not tire myself, and if I did, it matters not. My race is run. Pray God to be merciful to me, a sinner. What I ask of you, dear Catherine, is this. When I returned to Harry the engagement ring and all his sweet, loving letters — they were my treasures — I surreptitiously, as it were, kept back one little gift of his. It was of no intrinsic value, and so I compromised

with my poor weak heart, sorely tried, by keeping this one little memento of Harry's love — rather two; for with the pretty book mark in this package, which he sent me, there is a little rosebud, which he pinned upon my breast the evening we pledged our love to each other. I have kept them both sacredly — yes, Catherine dear, sacredly; for, although I knew they were but the shadow of a light that had faded forever — an echo of a voice I should never hear again — my poor weak heart found a little comfort in these hidden relics that I have clung to.

"Catherine dear, take them, please, and when I am gone, send them to Harry — you will find his address in the envelope — and tell him all that I have told you. Tell him, with my 'good-by,' that — I never — loved — any other — but him."

She closed her eyes and turned her face away. Catherine was too much moved to make any reply for several minutes.

"Margaret dear," she said at length, "I will do as you ask me to. But let us rest now; I am sure you are exhausted."

Turning again her wan face to her friend, she said: "My sweet Catherine, you do not

understand me if you think these thoughts disturb me now seriously. The little matter of which I have spoken to you is buried in the past. If I have shown any emotion in referring to it, it is simply an outburst of that poor, weak human nature which clings to us till we are laid in the grave. Till our hearts and souls are absorbed in the infinitely perfect, the eternal, earthly loves distract and earthly memories chain us. But I have no regrets, Catherine dear, except for my own many faults. Pray for me, that our loving Heavenly Father may mercifully blot out all my sins and take me home to Himself."

Catherine made no reply, except to press Margaret's hand affectionately to her lips. Her whole soul was too much stirred to speak aloud.

Sister Winifred was a little startled as she entered, fearing that Margaret was sinking and Catherine overcome with grief. As she approached them hurriedly, she saw that her fears were groundless. Margaret smiled peacefully, and Catherine too, as she lifted her face from the bed, although her eyes were suffused with tears, smiled pleasantly.

"Miss Sidney," said the sister, "you must go now and rest for a little while. I am sure you are fatigued."

As she started to go, Mrs. Allen came into the room, and Sister Winifred followed Catherine, leaving mother and daughter alone, in what proved to be their last visit together. When Catherine called early the following morning, Margaret had passed into eternity.

XXXI

Cap à L'Aigle

THE third morning after the party broke up at Oakhurst, Fred received a letter from Governor Dix's secretary, saying that after careful consideration of the case of Joseph Gannon, His Excellency had decided to grant the pardon asked for. The necessary papers would be sent to Sing Sing during the coming week. Fred immediately wrote to the warden of the prison as follows:

DEAR SIR, — A letter just received from the governor's secretary informs me that a pardon will be issued, in a few days, to Joseph Gannon. The latter will probably need some new clothes, etc., as well as a ticket to New York. Will you kindly see that he is provided with whatever he needs? I enclose for that purpose my check, fifty ($50) dollars.

Very truly yours,

FRED DRAYTON

TO THE WARDEN OF THE STATE PRISON
SING SING, N. Y.

The same mail brought a letter to Agnes from Catherine, telling her of Margaret Allen's death and of the plans the Ewings had made for the summer.

She spoke enthusiastically of the pleasure which her visit to Oakhurst had given her, and expressed the hope that she might see Agnes before starting for Canada.

The letter from Albany was very gratifying to Fred, for he knew that Joe Gannon's pardon would bring a great deal of happiness to the poor widowed mother, as well as to Miss Catherine Sidney.

The news which Agnes gave him concerning the Canadian trip completely upset him, and he was obliged to take a stroll through the woods before he could quite make up his mind how to act in the situation. He took the first train to New York which he could catch after lunch, and went directly to the Ewings'.

Miss Catherine met him graciously. But from the moment she entered the parlor he was conscious of a change in her which was not favorable to him, and he was at first somewhat ill at ease in consequence. He expressed his great regret at hearing of her plans to spend the summer in Canada, and

told her how disappointed they were, Agnes and himself, at the thought of not seeing her again soon at Oakhurst, as they had hoped to. She smiled and assured him that she did not expect to find anything in Canada as attractive as the beautiful home in Westchester. When he told her of the news he had received from Albany, her whole face lit up with delight, and she became at once enthusiastic.

"Oh that will give poor, dear Mrs. Gannon so much happiness!" she exclaimed. "I will go around at once to see her and give her the good news. Mr. Drayton, you have certainly been very thoughtful and kind in this matter, and I am sure God will bless you for it."

"It was very little for me to do," he replied, "and I am abundantly rewarded in the knowledge of the comfort it will give the afflicted mother, as well as by the thought that I have been able to give you some little pleasure."

"I shall tell her how good you have been in helping so generously," said Catherine, "and she certainly will pray for you."

This more natural and affable manner in Catherine emboldened Fred to speak to her

of what was uppermost in his mind. After reverting to the subject of her prolonged absence from New York, and assuring her that she would be terribly missed, he said: "Miss Catherine, will you allow me to write to you, and may I hope to hear from you while you are away?"

"O Mr. Drayton, I hardly think that would be best. Please don't ask it," she replied. "I will write Agnes, telling her just where we are, what we are doing, and how we like everybody and everything there. And I hope she will tell me all the news of Oakhurst."

"That will certainly be very nice, Miss Catherine, and I am sure Agnes will be delighted to hear from you and to write herself. But, really, that is not quite all I want. I shall be bitterly disappointed, my dear friend, if you do not let me hear sometimes directly from you. Please say you will, I beg of you."

Catherine had fully anticipated the present situation and had made up her mind that if Fred should propose a correspondence she would discourage it; for she did not think that, under existing circumstances, it would

be wise. Yet now she hesitated. Her loving, womanly nature told her that there is a wisdom of the heart as well as the head, and that folly may be suggested by either. She was about now to leave him — the man whom she admired more than any whom she had known and whose esteem she prized most highly. She need not or would not, even subconsciously, consider this mutual regard as love. She did not wish to have him pass out of her life, and it certainly would be painful to her to think that he could forget her. And so, naturally enough, she temporized — compromised, if you will, with herself. She was silent for a few moments, as he looked imploringly at her.

"Mr. Drayton, if you should have any *very* good news — such, for instance, as you have given me to-day — I shall expect you to write and tell me about it, and, I promise you, I am always prompt in answering my correspondence. I hope Agnes will be able to come in and see me before we go. But if she does not, tell her, please, that I expect her to write me often, and let me know all about herself and about the Brocton Brook mystery."

"If she doesn't I will," replied Fred. "I have been made a confidant in that secret, and I think you should share it with us." He was now in a happier frame of mind, for he had obtained her promise that he might hear from her. "When do you go, Miss Catherine?" he asked.

"We take the train at nine-thirty Monday morning; spend Monday night and Tuesday in Montreal, and go on by boat Tuesday night to Cap à l'Aigle, by way of Quebec. We may stop over a day or two, if the weather is pleasant, in the old French city."

"You will enjoy the trip, I am sure. The ride up the Hudson and through Vermont is delightful at this season. I shall give myself the pleasure of seeing you Monday morning."

"I hope you will, indeed," she replied, "if it will not inconvenience you too much." They parted very good friends. Catherine was pleasant and cordial with him. But he saw plainly that she was a little nervous, and he could not himself quite recover from the sobering effect produced by her manner when they met.

From the Ewings he went directly to Dr.

Eaton's, hoping to find his friend in. The doctor was out when he called, but as the maid said he was expected home soon, Fred went in. He busied himself for a half hour or more looking over the books in the library. When the doctor came in, he greeted Fred cordially, and expressed regret that he had been kept waiting so long. After a little general conversation Fred said: "Doctor, you promised to let me have some reading matter which would give me a better knowledge of your Church and her teachings. I have just been looking over a work which I found here on your table, entitled 'Protestantism and Catholicity Compared, in their Effects upon the Civilization of Europe,' and I am interested in it."

"It is a masterpiece!" exclaimed the doctor, enthusiastically. "The author, Balmes, was one of the greatest scholars and soundest philosophers of modern times, although he died at the age of thirty-eight. You cannot do better than to read it. For controversial discussion I am partial to this little book." And he handed him Milner's "End of Controversy." "If you care to study the mystical or devotional side of the religious life, read

Father Faber. You will find his 'Life and Letters,' by Father Bowden, interesting and instructive, and it will give you a good insight into the Tractarian Movement, which exerted such a tremendous influence on the religious thought of England and America thirty years ago, and is still bearing good fruit. And last but not least, take with you Cardinal Gibbons' 'Faith of our Fathers.' [1] There is a lot more of good reading here on my shelves, but I think the four books you have there are as much as you can conveniently carry with you, and they will keep you busy for some time."

"Thank you, doctor, I will take them, and promise you I will read them. Now there is another matter that has occurred to me in this connection. I have really never been acquainted with any of your clergymen. Don't you think it would be well for me to meet one or more of your priests with whom I might confer regarding any subject upon which I might wish for information?"

"An excellent idea, Fred. Now let me

[1] This is a slight anticipation, as the work was first published in 1876, and the Archbishop of Baltimore was created a Cardinal in 1886.

see. I will be glad to give you a letter of introduction to my good friend Father Preston, the rector of St. Ann's Church, on Twelfth Street. He is a New England convert, distinguished both for his learning and his piety; and I am sure you will find him an agreeable acquaintance."

"Doctor, that will be very good of you. If you will kindly write such a letter, I will be glad to call at my earliest convenience on Father Preston. But I must hurry off now to catch my train, or I shall reach home late for dinner." And taking the four books under his arm, he bade the doctor "good-by."

Fred was at the station in good season Monday morning to see his friends off and wish them *bon voyage*. He handed Catherine a bouquet of sweet, fresh flowers which, he told her, had been culled that morning at Oakhurst.

Her prayer-book, which she used constantly during the summer, preserved between its leaves several little forget-me-nots which she took from this bouquet.

The travellers arrived in Montreal late that evening, spent the night and following day there, and went on to Quebec, by boat,

Tuesday night. Both at Montreal and Quebec they found much to interest them, and, as Catherine afterwards wrote Agnes, they could have enjoyed a week at both places, but they felt the necessity of hurrying on to Cap à l'Aigle, where the servants had gone with the baggage. They left Quebec by boat at eight o'clock Thursday morning, and reached Cap à l'Aigle at three in the afternoon. The cottage which they had taken stood on the hill, about half a mile from the landing, and commanded a fine view of the St. Lawrence — which at this point has the appearance of an inland sea — as well as of the mountainous country to the north. The weather was uncomfortably cold when they arrived, and the open fires which greeted them at the cottage were very welcome.

XXXII

Lenox

THE Eatons spent the month of July in Lenox, at the old Curtis Hotel. The doctor had invited Fred to celebrate the Fourth with them there, and as the holiday that year came on Friday, he went up Thursday afternoon and remained over Sunday. The noisy festivities which usually distinguish the celebration of Independence Day in a New England village were in evidence this year in Lenox, and were sufficient to attract a goodly number of provincials, who vied with the townsfolk in their patriotic efforts fitly to celebrate the "Glorious Fourth."

These demonstrations, however, were not as attractive to our city friends as they apparently were to the natives. After an hour spent on the hotel veranda, watching the motley crowds that passed up and down Main Street, the doctor, with Mrs. Eaton and Fred, took an open carriage and drove about

the beautifully cultivated country which surrounds Lenox, going as far south as Stockbridge. The children preferred to remain at home with the nurse, enjoying their firecrackers and torpedoes and watching the military parade. In the evening they were entertained by a pretty display of fireworks that were set off on the square in front of their hotel.

After breakfast Saturday morning the gentlemen lit their cigars and started off for a walk. As they passed the little frame church on Main Street, which stands back two hundred feet from the road, the doctor lifted his hat. Fred noticed this and asked his friend why he always did so when he passed a Catholic church.

"To honor Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar," he replied. "Mrs. Eaton and I assist at the seven o'clock mass in that little church every morning."

Fred looked surprised, but was silent for a few moments, as they walked on, under the tall, spreading elms that shade the pretty street, and started up the little hill. The doctor was convinced that Fred had something on his mind that he wanted to talk

about, and so waited for him to introduce his subject in his own way.

"Doctor," he began slowly, as though he were a little uncertain just how to express himself, "I am satisfied that you Catholics are more in earnest, more zealous in the practice of your religion than the members of any other Church. But there are some things which I cannot comprehend in your doctrines and in your way of doing things. Why don't you subject your theology to the test of modern criticism and recognize that the religious world cannot stand still or move along in the old ruts any more than scientific or social or political forces? Modern progress has left its impress on every institution in the world and upon every phase of life — except the Catholic Church. Why do you hug the musty, old scholastic ideas of generations long since dead and buried? Why not let the sunlight of to-day into your chambers of thought and reasoning? And how can you subject your intelligence and your very conscience to the dicta of a few men who claim an infallible wisdom and authority because they happen to hold certain exalted positions in the Church? Or how can you

subscribe to the infallibility of the Bishop of Rome?"

Fred was now speaking quite earnestly. He was evidently a good deal worked up over the religious question, and the doctor was delighted to hear him talk in this vigorous, albeit intolerant way. He knew that an honest antagonist, though swayed by prejudice and moved by personal considerations, offers a better field for controversial work, and gives more promise of actual results, than the complaisant, unresisting, phlegmatic character, who accepts everything — or at least resists nothing — and in the end proves to be utterly irresponsive and yields no fruit. In the former case there is at least an incentive to effort; in the latter it is hopeless.

Dr. Eaton had listened quietly to Fred's volley of questions, and now he hesitated a few moments, deliberating how best to reply. He realized that Fred had some ill-defined difficulties in his mind that could be solved only by patient reflection, careful analysis, and intelligent reasoning.

"Fred, my dear fellow," he said, "before undertaking to answer questions which seem to me a little indefinite, and are certainly

very broad, let me in turn ask you a few questions. Or rather, let me suggest a few general propositions, to which I assume you will readily assent. If I am mistaken in supposing that you are in accord with me in regard to these first principles, correct me in any statement I may make.

"You hold, I take it, the generally accepted belief of all Christians, that there is an eternal God, the Creator and Conservator of all things; that Jesus Christ, born of a Virgin, was true God and true Man; that He suffered and died for our redemption; that He established a Church which was to teach all nations, to the end of time, and lead men in the ways of truth and holiness to God."

"Yes," interjected Fred, "I believe all that. But the question with me is, where and what is that Church?"

"For the present," continued the doctor, "I am only laying down the principle that Christ did establish in the world a Church. According to the Scriptures, which you accept as an infallible guide, Christ said to his disciples: 'Upon this rock *I will build my church*, and the gates of hell *shall not prevail against it*.' In the first part of this solemn statement

the Redeemer of the world announces in precise words that He is about to establish His Church; in the second that that Church shall be infallible. What other possible interpretation can be put upon God's words, 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' than that the powers of darkness and error shall not destroy it. If this Church built by Him who is infinite truth and holiness could ever teach error, then would the gates of hell prevail against it and His promise would fail. Moreover, you will remember that His last words to His disciples on earth, before ascending into heaven, were: 'Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.' The eleven individuals to whom these words were addressed were soon themselves to pass from this life. When, therefore, Christ says to them, '*I am with you all days*, even to the consummation of the world,' He could only mean, not alone His immediate disciples there present, but equally, and in like manner, their successors, who were to teach all nations — in a word, that Church against which He declares the gates of hell shall not prevail. Now stop and ask yourself, is it possible that a Church thus built

upon a rock by the infinite Author of all truth, to which infallibility was promised by this same infinitely wise and all-powerful God, should fall away from the truth — should teach error? Is it not a monstrous presumption to suppose that such a Church, the creation of an infinite being, could be *reformed* by weak, sinful men?

"You will reply to this, perhaps, by reiterating the accusations of every rebellious son of Mother Church, of every heretic and schismatic that has wandered away from the fold of Christ during the past four hundred years. You will tell me that this divinely instituted Church had for a thousand years been teaching error, and that her bishops and priests were steeped in corruption; that the Reformation was merely a bringing back of the old Church to her ancient moorings. To which I reply, a Church divinely instituted, to which the presence of God has been pledged for all time, cannot, in the nature of things, teach error; upon the word of God it is, and must be, infallible.

"As to subjecting our intelligence and consciences to the dictation of a few men, who, you say, base their claims to infallible

wisdom and authority upon the fact that they happen to hold certain official positions, we must remember that God's work on this earth has been intrusted to mortal, sinful men. Witness Moses, David, and the other rulers and teachers of Israel, who offended God; was their prerogative of leading and teaching the people destroyed because of their sin? You remember the words of Our Saviour: 'The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses. All things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but according to their works, do ye not.' What I mean to point out is, that eternal truth is not impaired or weakened by the imperfections or the crimes of any man, or set of men, who are commissioned to teach the truth. I need not remind you, a lawyer, that the interpretations of the Constitution of our country by the Supreme Court of the United States are binding upon us all, whatsoever we may think of the individual members of that court.

"Just one point further in this matter, Fred. Your philosophy tells you that truth is one and indivisible — a thing cannot be true and false at the same time — and that

it is eternal. Were it otherwise, God's work would not be perfect. That which was divinely revealed truth in the first century of the Church could not suffer change in its essence with the lapse of ages; could not be transformed into error by reason of any development of material science or social forces. But such a transformation is precisely what is postulated by your question, 'Why don't you Catholics subject your theology to the test of modern scientific criticism?'"

They had reached the summit of the hill, turned to the left, through the beautiful forest of pine, hemlock, and birch, which grow so luxuriantly there, and seated themselves on a bench, from which they beheld an exquisite panorama of the Berkshire Hills, with the Catskill Mountains far away to the south and west; and in the valley below the green fields and cultivated grounds of the private estates.

"Doctor," said Fred, "I agree with you in what you say about the divine institution of the Church and the necessity of a teaching authority. But it seems to me that you Catholics are exaggerated in your — what

shall I say? — credulity. You seem to accept blindly the dogmatic teachings of your bishops and priests. And it is impossible for me to comprehend how you can subscribe to the doctrine of papal infallibility."

"If I understand you correctly, Fred, you raise two objections against Catholics — first, our credulity in general, and secondly, our acceptance, specifically, of the dogma of infallibility. As to your first point, I assure you our faith is identical with that of the Christians of the first century. What is termed by the theologians 'the deposit of faith' — that is, the divine truths revealed by Christ and preached by His apostles — has been preserved in its integrity, through all the ages, in the Catholic Church, neither augmented nor diminished. It is true that the doctrines taught by the Divine Founder of our religion were developed and more clearly defined with the marvellous growth of His Church, as circumstances called forth such definitions. Christ said to His apostles: 'I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. . . . The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all

things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.'

"Many of the truths of revealed religion were not made what we term 'articles of faith' for centuries after the apostolic age. The propagation of error always, of necessity, calls forth from the teaching Church a declaration of the truth. But the question then is simply, what has always been the belief of the Church — as St. Vincent of Lerins has it, 'the Tradition of the Catholic Church, *which has been believed everywhere, at all times, and by all.*' When such a declaration is promulgated by the Church to the Christian world, we Catholics bow our heads and hearts to her teaching. For us there is no longer room for doubt.

"Now, as to our submission to the Pope, which you find it so difficult to understand. Let me ask you, is it not essential to the stability of any organization, whether political, commercial, social, or religious, that it should have a recognized head? Does your experience or your reading afford any example to the contrary? And if supreme authority is indispensable in all other societies of men, is it not preëminently so in the great Chris-

tian family which embraces all nations and tribes in the world, in which so many heterogeneous elements are bound together in one faith, in one hope, in one divine charity, and where so many conflicting views are constantly springing up and calling for prompt and authoritative solution? And was not this essential prerogative clearly defined by the Divine Founder of our Faith on many occasions?

"'All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going, therefore, *teach* ye all nations.' 'He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.' 'He [the Spirit of Truth] shall abide with you, and shall be in you.' 'He will teach you all truth.' 'As the Father has sent me, I also send you.'

"And St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, says to us, 'Obey your prelates and be subject to them.'

"Our Protestant friends insist that these words of Our Lord were addressed to His apostles only; that all revealed truth was committed by them to writing, and that the Bible consequently is the sole rule of faith. But when I study the language of Our Lord I find that He nowhere instructs His dis-

ciples to write anything, but commands them merely to go forth and *teach*. And as He says, 'Teach ye all nations,' and adds immediately, 'I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world,' it is quite evident to me that His words were addressed, not alone to those who were there present, but to their successors as well — to the end of time.

"Only two of the four Evangelists were apostles. And St. Paul was converted to Christianity only after the death of Our Lord. A considerable portion of the New Testament was written many years after; the Gospel of St. John during the last decade of the first century. It is impossible to suppose that the sacred writers in committing their narratives, or their exhortations, to writing believed they were fulfilling the command of their Divine Master to teach all nations. If the commission given them was to write, nine out of the eleven would seem to have been derelict in the fulfilment of their sacred charge. And if membership in the Christian Church was limited to those who read the Scriptures, the number of early Christians must have been small indeed.

"Is it, then, possible for me, or for any

would-be Christian, to determine intelligently and conclusively what to believe and what to reject, solely and exclusively from the reading of the Bible? And where then shall I seek the truth, with perfect assurance that I shall not be led into error?

"To my mind there can be no doubt upon this point. It must be sought in *the living, teaching Church*, which Christ Himself has established — 'the pillar and ground of the truth.' And who will voice to me the teachings of this Church? Who but him to whom Christ said, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to *thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever *thou* shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever *thou* shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven'? To whom, moreover, the Divine Master said, 'I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren.' Who, I say, shall be the mouthpiece of the Christian Church unless this same Peter, speaking through the supreme pontiffs, his successors in the Apostolic See?

"And as to the supremacy of that See — you are a better historian, I believe, Fred, than I am — history tells you unmistakably, however distasteful the fact may be to Protestants, that the See of Rome has held that supremacy from the earliest ages of the Church; that the Christian world in every century has turned to this Apostolic See as the centre of religious unity, as the court of last resort in matters of faith and morals."

The conversation was interrupted here by the approach of some friends of the doctor's from the hotel. They rose and greeted them cordially, and were persuaded to join the party in a stroll through the woods and back to the village by a roundabout road.

Fred enjoyed his stay in Lenox greatly. But Mrs. Eaton remarked to the doctor, after he left, that it seemed to her Fred had, of late, grown quite serious and thoughtful.

XXXIII

"Dear Old Oakhurst"

FRED found Father Preston all that the doctor had described him — a scholar, a thoroughly religious man, and always a gentleman. On his first call Father Preston gave him a copy of Butler's Catechism — really a child's primer of Christian Doctrine — advised him to study it carefully, and suggested the reading, every day, of at least one chapter of "The Following of Christ." On his second call, after answering several questions Fred put to him, Father Preston gave him a copy of Deharbe's Catechism, then "A Manual of Instruction in Christian Doctrine," and Dalgairns' "The Holy Communion."

The lesson he endeavored to impress upon Fred's mind, in all his interviews, as the latter told Dr. Eaton, was the importance of cultivating the virtue of humility as a prerequisite of a clear conception of divine truth.

On the fifteenth of August Fred wrote Catherine as follows:

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION.

MY DEAR MISS CATHERINE, — Yesterday I was received into the Catholic Church, by Father Preston, and this morning made my first communion, at St. Ann's Church.

I need not tell you that it has been the happiest day of my life. As I knelt at the foot of the altar, between a little girl and a decrepit old man, I found it difficult to restrain the tears — tears of gratitude and joy.

As Dalgairns so beautifully says, "If there is a place in the wide world where it is easy to feel like a child, it is at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." . . .

I beg, my dear friend, that you will lift your heart with mine to God, in thanksgiving and praise, for the priceless gift of Faith which He has bestowed upon me.

Always sincerely your friend,

FRED DRAYTON

Catherine read and reread this letter several times, and then — womanlike — buried her face in her hands and gave way to a flood of tears. As soon as she had recovered her composure, she made her way, unobserved, to the little chapel, where she had spent many hours in silent prayer. The prayer had been that the "priceless gift" might be granted to the friend whose remembrance filled so

large a part of her life. The prayer had been heard. And now she "lifted her heart with his to God in thanksgiving and praise."

That evening, when she rose from the piano, Mrs. Ewing said: "Catherine dear, I always enjoy your music; but it seems to me I have never heard you play quite so sweetly before. Tell me, darling, you have had good news to-day from home?" And taking her hand, she drew the girl close to her side and looked into her telltale eyes.

"Mr. Drayton is a Catholic," she replied. And a slight blush mantled her cheeks. Mrs. Ewing kissed her affectionately and smiled.

The family gave up their summer quarters at Cap à l'Aigle on the first of September, and returned to New York by the way of Quebec and the White Mountains.

As soon as Agnes Drayton learned that they were in New York, she called at the Fifth Avenue residence and insisted on Catherine's returning with her to Oakhurst. Mrs. Ewing was, of course, called in to express her opinion, or rather her wishes, in the matter. As soon as Agnes explained the situation, she at once exclaimed: "Why, certainly, my dear Catherine, I think you ought to go,

and stay just as long as you find you are enjoying yourself."

Catherine was not at all reluctant herself to accept the invitation, and it did not require many minutes for her to make the necessary preparation. The Drayton carriage met them at the Chappaqua station, and drove quickly to the house on the hill.

As they entered the broad gates and drove through the beautiful grounds of Oakhurst, Catherine realized a delightful sense, as it were, of home-coming. The memory of her first visit had always been a pleasant one — though at times she had feared it might be her last. And now she was received with such cordial, unaffected hospitality by all, she could not but feel at home, surrounded by dear friends. Fred was absent when they arrived, having been called away to Albany on some legal business, but returned home the following afternoon. Stephen met him at the station, with the carriage, and Agnes and Catherine were there, mounted on Kitty and Dolly. After greeting the young ladies heartily, he got into the open carriage, his fair attendants preceding him as they turned towards Oakhurst.

Catherine was kept so busy talking that evening at the table, as she told of her Canadian summer and described the interesting little happenings at Cap à l'Aigle, that Agnes finally turned to her and said: "Catherine, if you don't stop talking and eat your dinner, I shall think you don't appreciate the dishes I have had prepared especially for you." Catherine was quite ready to take Agnes' hint; although, for some reason, she really had very little appetite.

After dinner — which lasted well on into the evening — while Agnes was out, giving directions for the following day, Fred invited Catherine to take a stroll through the grounds. They soon found their way to the Little Lake and to the old trysting-place on the upper bank — the vantage ground of the picturesque valley. The night was much like the night when they were last there together, three months ago, but for the density and coloring of the foliage. The sear and yellow leaf was rapidly encroaching upon the green, and the shadows on the water were more attenuated — symbols of maturity. But the scene was none the less beautiful.

They stood there for a few minutes without

speaking. Then Fred, turning to her, as she rested her arm in his, said, "Catherine, it is much like the night when we stood here together three months ago; save that the broad chasm that separated our souls then has, thank God, been closed — and that I love you more tenderly and devotedly now."

She placed her hand in his, and her head rested on his shoulder.

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